The Use of Anonymous Characters in Greek Tragedy

THE SHAPING OF HEROES

FLORENCE YOON

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The Shaping of Heroes

By

Florence Yoon

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

For my parents,
and Art Aeon

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REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Texts are cited from the most recent OCT editions for all authors with the exception of scholia and Aelian, for which I have used the Teubner texts. When the scholars listed below are cited by surname only, I refer to their commentaries. Commentary on specific lines is indicated by *ad* ⟨line number(s)⟩; otherwise the number given is the page number.

Allan (H)	Allan, W. (2008) *Euripides' Helen* (Cambridge)
Allan (Hcl.)	Allan, W. (2001) *Euripides: The Children of Heracles* (Warminster)
AO	Austin, C. & Olson, S.D. (2004) *Aristophanes: Thesmophoriazusae* (Oxford)
Barrett	Barrett, W. (1964) *Euripides: Hippolytus* (Oxford)
Blaydes	Blaydes, F. (1898) *Aeschyli Agamemnon* (Halle)
Boyle	Boyle, A. (1987) *Seneca's Phaedra* (Liverpool)
Broadhead	Broadhead, H. (1960) *The Persae of Aeschylus* (Cambridge)
Brown	Brown, A. (1987) *Sophocles: Antigone* (Warminster)
Burian	Burian, P. (2007) *Euripides: Helen* (Warminster)
Conacher	Conacher, D. (1988) *Euripides: Alcestis* (Warminster)
CM	Coffey, M. & Mayer, R. (1990) *Seneca: Phaedra* (Cambridge)
Cropp	Cropp, M. (1988) *Euripides: Electra* (Warminster)
Dale (A)	Dale, A.M. (1954) *Euripides: Alcestis* (Oxford)
Dale (H)	Dale, A.M. (1967) *Euripides: Helen* (Oxford)
Dawe	Dawe, R. (2006) *Sophocles' Oedipus Rex*, 2nd edition (Cambridge)
Denniston	Denniston, J. (1939) *Euripides: Electra* (Oxford)
DP	Denniston, J. & Page, D. (1957) *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford)
Easterling	Easterling, P. (1982) *Sophocles' Trachiniae* (Cambridge)
Elmsley	Elmsley, P. (1822) *Euripides Medea* (Leipzig)
Finglass	Finglass, P. (2007) *Sophocles: Electra* (Cambridge)
Fraenkel	Fraenkel, E. (1950) *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* I–III (Oxford)
Garvie (C)	Garvie, A. (1986) *Aeschylus: Choephori* (Oxford)
Garvie (A)	Garvie, A. (1998) *Sophocles: Ajax* (Warminster)
Garvie (P)	Garvie, A. (2009) *Aeschylus: Persians* (Oxford)
Griffith	Griffith, M. (1999) *Sophocles: Antigone* (Cambridge)
Groeneboom	Groeneboom, P. (1960) *Aischylos' Perser* (Göttingen)
Hainsworth	Hainsworth, R. (1993) *The Iliad: a commentary, Vol. 3* (Cambridge)
Hall	Hall, E. (1996) *Aeschylus: Persians* (Warminster)
Halleran	Halleran, M. (1995) *Euripides: Hippolytus* (Warminster)
Hoekstra	Heubeck, A. & Hoekstra, A. (1989) *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey, Vol. 2* (Oxford)

Hutchinson	Hutchinson, G. (1985) *Aeschylus: Septem contra Thebas* (Oxford)
Janko	Janko, R. (1992) *The Iliad: a commentary, Vol. 4* (Cambridge)
Jebb	Jebb, R. (1883–1907) *Sophocles: the plays and fragments*, I–VII (Cambridge)
FJW	Friis Johansen, H. & Whittle, E. (1980) *Aeschylus: The Suppliants*, I–III (Copenhagen)
Kamerbeek	Kamerbeek, J. (1953–1984) *The plays of Sophocles: commentaries* (Leiden)
Kannicht	Kannicht, R. (1969) *Euripides: Helena* (Heidelberg)
Kells	Kells, H. (1973) *Sophocles: Electra* (Cambridge)
Kirk	Kirk, G. (1990) *The Iliad: a commentary, Vol. 2* (Cambridge)
Lee	Lee, K. (1997) *Euripides: Ion* (Warminster)
Lloyd	Lloyd, M. (2005) *Euripides: Andromache* 2nd edition (Warminster)
LP	Lupaş, L. & Petre, Z. (1981) *Commentaire aux Sept contre Thèbes d'Eschyle* (Bucharest and Paris)
March	March, J. (2001) *Sophocles: Electra* (Warminster)
Mastronarde (P)	Mastronarde, D. (1994) *Euripides: Phoenissae* (Cambridge)
Mastronarde (M)	Mastronarde, D. (2002) *Euripides: Medea* (Cambridge)
Owen	Owen, A. (1939) *Euripides: Ion* (Oxford)
Page	Page, D. (1938) *Euripides: Medea* (Oxford)
Parker	Parker, L. (2007) *Euripides: Alcestis* (Oxford)
Sommerstein (E)	Sommerstein, A. (1989) *Aeschylus: Eumenides* (Cambridge)
Sommerstein (T)	Sommerstein, A. (1994) *Aristophanes: Thesmophoriazusae* (Warminster)
Stevens	Stevens, P. (1971) *Euripides: Andromache* (Oxford)
Stockert	Stockert, W. (1992) *Euripides Iphigenie in Aulis* (Wien), I–II
Verdenius	Verdenius, W. (1985) *A commentary on Hesiod: Works and days, vv. 1–382* (Leiden)
West (Th)	West, M. (1966) *Hesiod. Theogony* (Oxford)
West (WD)	West, M. (1978) *Hesiod. Works and Days* (Oxford)
West (O)	West, M. (1987) *Euripides: Orestes* (Warminster)
West (A)	West, M. (1990) *Aeschyli tragoediae* (Stuttgart)
Wilkins	Wilkins, J. (1993) *Euripides: Heracleidae* (Oxford)
Willink	Willink, C. (1986) *Euripides: Orestes* (Oxford)

Other abbreviations:

FGrH	*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, F. Jacoby (ed.) (Berlin, 1923–1958)
KA	*Poetae Comici Graeci*, R. Kassel & C. Austin (eds.) (Berlin, 1983–1995)
LGPN	*Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, I–VA (Oxford, 1987–2010)
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zürich, 1981–1997)
TrGF	*Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt (eds.) I–V (Göttingen, 1971–2004)

INTRODUCTION

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

The world of Greek tragedy revolves around its heroes. It is their stories that the playwrights tell, and it is their circumstances, actions, and decisions that command the audience's attention and demand a reaction. Yet while the stage is dominated by these imposing figures, it is also home to a broad range of humbler characters who are identified not by name, but by occupation.[1] Their primary dramatic functions, like their eponymous roles within the plays, are usually practical and mundane; however, anonymous characters have the potential to make a significant contribution to the portrayal of the heroes which is so subtle as to be easily overlooked, yet striking upon close scrutiny.

This may not, at first glance, seem particularly remarkable. Minor characters, anonymous or named, are often used for this purpose in many literary and dramatic genres; any secondary character can be (and often is) a foil, a confidant, or a catalyst. Similarly, the significance of nomenclature, or the lack thereof, is broadly recognized in literary criticism,[2] and anonymity can be (and often is) used in the construction of identity and the defining of relationships. Anonymous characters in Greek tragedy, however, are in a unique position because of the genre's grounding in mythology and history.[3] Broadly speaking, both of these types of tradition depend on and are

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[1] Although there is clearly some room for editorial preference, such characters are usually referred to by their occupation, not by their role within the play. So, for example, Electra's husband in Euripides' play is generally referred to by scholars as Autourgos or Farmer or Peasant, not as Husband. This is useful in making a rough distinction between the messengers who function only as practical conveyors of information (e.g. in *Persae*, *Ajax*, and *Bacchae*), and who will not be considered in this study (cf. p. 6 below), from those whose roles are more dramatically developed and are usually given more precise titles (e.g. the Herald in *Agamemnon*, the Guard in *Antigone*, and the Servants in *Alcestis*).

[2] Onomastics is a separate field dating back at least to Plato's *Cratylus*. An excellent modern example of an application of name theory to literary interpretation is Barton (1990).

[3] There is perhaps some similarity with anonymous characters in the Bible, who also belong to a historical/mythological tradition; however, the Bible has many major anonymous characters in addition to subordinates, which reflects a significant difference in the perception of namelessness. The two types are discussed in Reinhartz' excellent study on biblical anonymity (1998). On the relationship between myth and tragedy, see e.g. Burian (1997).

transmitted through the names of their heroes.[4] We speak of the Labours of Heracles and the Rape of Persephone, and the names 'Oedipus' and 'Helen,' like 'Pericles' and 'Socrates,' immediately bring to mind particular stories. Of course, it is fundamentally impossible to determine just how familiar what we now call 'Greek mythology' would have been to the plays' original audience,[5] but it is hardly stretching credulity to assume a general acquaintance with the major events and figures of the extant plays. Even if the average spectator would not have recalled the precise details of Oedipus' lineage or sufferings, his name and the broad outlines of his story would almost certainly have been familiar, just as in modern times the name Napoleon would be recognized by the average person and immediately associated with certain characteristics or deeds, though the details might be vague or incomplete.[6]

The tragedian, then, can only take up a mythological or a historical episode through the characters that define it, regardless of the many variations that may exist and the freedom with which he may use them; whatever he may do, the heroes are still bound to the background of received tradition. When Euripides writes his *Electra*, for example, he contrives a new setting and unique interpretation of the main characters, but he does so by working consciously against convention; the effectiveness of his inno-

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[4] Cf. the distinction drawn by Aristotle (1451b) between τὰ γενόμενα ὀνόματα of tragedy and τὰ τυχόντα ὀνόματα of comedy. See also Barton (1990:30). It is worth noting that tragic named characters are usually introduced as soon as is feasible, even when their identities are quite clear from context, while Aristophanes often delays naming his protagonists for significant lengths of time; cf. e.g. Manton (1982), pp. 147–148 below.

[5] The ancient opposition is between Aristotle's statement that the myths were only known to a few, and the fragment of Antiphanes which assumes their popular prevalence: Aristotle *Poetics* 1451b 23–25: ὥστ' οὐ πάντως εἶναι ζητητέον τῶν παραδεδομένων μύθων, περὶ οὓς αἱ τραγῳδίαι εἰσίν, ἀντέχεσθαι. καὶ γὰρ γελοῖον τοῦτο ζητεῖν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ γνώριμα ὀλίγοις γνώριμά ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως εὐφραίνει πάντας. Antiphanes *Poiesis*, KA fr. 189.1–5: μακάριόν ἐστιν ἡ τραγῳδία /ποίημα κατὰ πάντ', εἴ γε πρῶτον οἱ λόγοι / ὑπὸ τῶν θεατῶν εἰσιν ἐγνωρισμένοι, / πρὶν καί τιν' εἰπεῖν · ὥσθ' ὑπομνῆσαι μόνον / δεῖ τὸν ποιητήν [...].

[6] Cf. e.g. Revermann (2006), Goldhill (1990:109–110). It is also debatable whether the audience's precise knowledge is an important consideration in such matters. It is the poet's own knowledge that determines his freedom, and though this is as impossible to determine as the audience's, we can at least assume a degree of learning and interest in matters mythological; the poet, if no one else, would know the traditional precedents of his heroes, and this must affect his own interpretation. Similarly, it is true that in a play as performed, a character's name may be spoken only once, and the spectator might easily miss it in a moment's inattention or a fit of coughing without this appreciably affecting his experience. However, this does not make the naming itself unimportant (just as it does not affect the play as written if the spectator falls asleep). It is the privilege of the reader, rather than the audience member, to share the poet's freedom to consider the characters at greater length.

vations depends largely on awareness of the traditional background. What is more, even in his unconventional version the cast of named characters does not change.

Anonymous characters, however, are not recorded by mythological and historical tradition, so that the tragedian does not routinely inherit them as he does the heroes.[7] Instead, nameless characters in tragedy are almost always invented by the poet who is unrestricted in this by conventional precedents of either action or characterization.[8] What is particularly remarkable is that this flexibility is used, as I shall argue throughout this study, not to create a new character who is of interest in himself, but instead to demonstrate or to facilitate the poet's chosen interpretation of the inherited heroes and their stories, and to do so without attracting the audience's attention to the anonymous character himself. It will be the main purpose of this study to demonstrate some of the many ways in which the anonymous character can be used to develop the most interesting facets of a poet's interpretation of a traditional hero.

How is this achieved? It is here that the flexibility of the anonymous character is most useful to the poet, and most frustrating for the generalizing critic, as each one is used as best suited to the unique circumstances of a particular play. The anonymous character may be given a significant soliloquy, monologue, or action; he may take part in a revealing dialogue or tableau. But in all cases, the tragedian cultivates the inherent self-effacement of

[7] Even in the exceptional case of the Nurse or Tutor who appears in versions of the Orestes myth from Stesichorus onwards, the variation in name, gender, age, and actions minimizes both the individuality and the continuity of the character (cf. pp. 130–131 below). There are certain cases in which the anonymity of a character is debatable, i.e. the Herald in *Agamemnon* (sometimes identified as Talthybius), the Queen in *Persae* (sometimes identified as Atossa), and the Herald and the Daughter of Heracles in *Heracleidae* (sometimes identified as Kopreus and Makaria); cf. Manton (1982:4). These will be considered in the course of this study, but it will become clear that I find such identifications problematic.

[8] It is entirely possible that some named characters were also invented by the poet, and are equally free from convention. Certainly there are some, such as Theonoe and Theoclymenus in *Helen* or Thoas in *IT*, who, as far as we can tell now, could have been given any or no name; cf. Reinhartz (1998:187) for biblical parallels. However, it is impossible to determine whether or not they would have been known to a fifth-century audience, just as we cannot judge the extent to which a character like Chrysothemis, who is barely mentioned in Homer, would have been recognizable by name. Attempts to trace a pre-tragic existence for most other minor figures (e.g. Garvie's attempt to prove the prior existence of Ajax' concubine Tecmessa (Garvie (A) *ad* 210–211); Gilbert's argument that Theonoe is recognizable as Euripides' adaptation of Homer's Eidothea from *Od.* 4.385–424 (1962:181–182)) are and can only be inconclusive. However, if anonymous characters were not the only ones freely invented they are at any rate the only ones of whom we can be sure.

anonymity, minimizing the audience's awareness of the anonymous figure as a character in his own right.[9] Dramatic and social subordination is the most important way in which this is accomplished; the nameless figure is clearly associated with a named, socially superior hero whose interests entirely dictate his own. This association often defines the terms by which we refer to these characters, such as 'Hermione's Nurse' or 'Eurystheus' Herald,' and though there is some room for variation, as we shall see, it usually takes the form of personal devotion and selflessness. Most anonymous characters have no concerns or motivations beyond the welfare of the heroes that they serve;[10] they have neither independent pasts nor futures.[11] Furthermore, the nameless figure rarely participates in direct conflict or contrast with any major character, and so does not compete with the heroes for the audience's attention and interest. Most anonymous characters, in fact, appear early in the play (or in the 'second prologue,' as in *Alcestis* and *Andromache*) before the action even begins, maximizing their effect without detracting from the primary business of the plot.

The self-effacement thus achieved by anonymous characters is so complete that they have for the most part successfully eluded the attention of critics. Commentaries always have a word or two to say about them, and some individuals, such as the Watchman in *Agamemnon* and the Tutor in Sophocles' *Electra*, have attracted attention in various articles and chapters; but there have been very few attempts to look at tragic anonymous characters, or any subdivision of these, as a class. An important exception to this is Brandt (1973), who focuses on the dramatic importance of those Euripidean slaves who act as "Vertrauten."[12] Apart from this, we have Moreau's article

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9 It is extremely unlikely that this is the result of any conscious design on the part of the poets. More probably, it is a natural effect of the tragedians' primary interest in the traditional stories and heroes.

10 Although we shall examine characters who do not lose sight of their own interests, such as the Watchman in *Antigone*, the Corinthian messenger in *OT*, the messenger in *Trachiniae*, and the Phrygian slave in *Orestes*, their personal interest is inseparable from gaining the favour of a powerful character, and therefore functions in the same way as disinterested loyalty in directing the focus of the audience's attention.

11 Although Nurses and Tutors in tragedy do have pasts, these are always explicitly in connection with their masters (in contrast with e.g. Eurycleia's personal history in the *Odyssey*).

12 A comparable set of characters was studied by Ahlers in his brief 1911 dissertation; however, his primary interest is in the development of the "Vertrautenrolle" and its growing use in plot advancement. More than half of his sixty pages is therefore dedicated to fragmentary or lost plays, and he has very little to say on the specific scenes in which these characters appear or the effects that they have on non-plot elements of the plays. Similarly, Proussis (1951) is interested in the development of the role of "popular" characters in tragedy as demonstrated

(1998) on "humble" characters in Aeschylus, and Karydas' study (1998) on Nurses in epic and tragedy. These, however, like many of the articles on various anonymous individuals, tend to overstate the intrinsic importance of the characters on whom they focus,[13] so that interesting observations result in unconvincing conclusions.

There are also a number of studies on slavery and slaves, largely focusing on Euripides;[14] these, like more general discussions of slavery, approach the texts from a historical rather than a literary perspective, sometimes with a view to determining the author's opinion on the institution. One consequence of this, particularly in the older works, is that they consider together both anonymous 'born' slaves and enslaved heroes. The distinction between the two types is clear; captive nobles, such as Hecuba and Andromache, are made powerless by fortune, not by 'nature.'[15] The social status of such noble war-captives does not place them on the same dramatic level as nameless slaves, just as the literal freedom of the Autourgos in Euripides' *Electra* does not distinguish him in literary terms from the anonymous slaves. The most important distinction is not between freeman and slave,[16] but between the named, independent heroes who follow their own desires to act, challenge, comply, or self-destruct regardless of their circumstances, and their anonymous subordinates, who fully accept their dependence and whose only will is their master's. Even the most minor named heroes possess surprising autonomy: Pylades directs Orestes at the climax

by the inclusion and roles of 'common people' (cf. the "democratic" focus of Gregory (1991)). He therefore considers first the plot significance of "subordinate" characters and then their "personalities," so that, while his is the only study I have discovered that superficially resembles my own in scope, the substance of the work is significantly different.

13 See pp. 7–8 below.

14 E.g. Schmidt (1891–1892), Protase (1959), Cuffel (1966), Lascu (1969), Kuch (1974), Synodinou (1977); more recently Zimmermann (2005) and Serghidou (2010). There are also several recent articles on 'sociology,' e.g. Hall (1997) and Gregory (2002).

15 Although they are perhaps less tragic (in Aristotelian terms) than those heroes who begin the play in prosperity, they are no less heroic. Cf. Thuc. 7.28, Aristotle *Politics* 1253–1255, Brandt (1973:5–7) and Section II.2.6 below.

16 Although enslaved heroes (or, more accurately, heroines) and choruses invariably lament the fall of their fortunes, anonymous characters in tragedy very rarely complain about their lot. The clear exception to this is the eager reaction of the Messenger in *Heracleidae* to the promise of his manumission; as he departs, he reminds Alcmene (888–891) of the promise she made in the first joy of hearing his news (788–789). However, as it is a spontaneous offer made to a character who has only just appeared and whose free/slave status would otherwise have been unknown, this functions primarily as an illustration of Alcmene's joy (perhaps to set off the imminent exhibition of her wrath). Cf. also the Slave/Ion's changing attitudes towards slavery (discussed in Section III.3 below).

of *Choephoroi*; Lichas in *Trachiniae* shows his own initiative in the deception of Deianeira; Menoeceus, in his very brief appearance in *Phoenissae*, chooses death against his father's will. True subordination therefore belongs not to the minor named character, but to the anonymous.

A more closely related entity is the chorus, or more particularly the chorus-leader. I omit these from the body of my discussion, as their own conventions are clearly distinct. Their lyric role cannot be entirely separated from their episodic functions; furthermore, they are usually barred from action and tend to demonstrate general sympathy rather than exclusive personal loyalty. However, the chorus certainly shares several crucial characteristics with anonymous individuals. They are nameless, usually socially insignificant, without any distinct purposes or goals of their own, and invented for a particular play. Their very ubiquity can make them inconspicuous, while oaths of silence and complicity, as in *Medea* and *IT*, achieve something similar to exclusive loyalty. More importantly, the chorus is sometimes used, like other anonymous characters, to demonstrate certain facets of the portrayal of the heroes. The panic of the Theban women in *Septem*, for example, is important in illustrating Eteocles' control and leadership as well as establishing atmosphere.[17] Such instances, however, are fairly rare, and constitute only the smallest part of the role of the chorus.

It is on the anonymous individuals, then, that I will focus. It will be immediately apparent that I do not examine all of them in detail; a particularly important omission is that of many anonymous Messengers. Like choruses, they are subject to specific conventions, and have inspired a substantial body of critical literature.[18] I do not propose to consider the narrative function of messengers; I therefore do not examine those 'bystander' characters whose role is restricted to delivering a messenger speech.[19]

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[17] It is admittedly debatable whether this illustration leaves a positive or negative impression of his leadership; contrast e.g. Podlecki (1964:284), who speaks of "an irascible despot" and "the petulance of his outburst," and Hutchinson 74: "To the excess of the women's terror [...] Eteocles opposes a virile self-mastery, resolution, and acceptance of fate." I am inclined to agree with Hutchinson, who reminds us *ad* 187–195 that "the harshness of Eteocles' invective is by no means exceptional" by Greek standards.

[18] See e.g. De Jong (1991), Barrett (2002), Dickin (2009), Perris (2011) and their bibliographies.

[19] This distinction is partially arbitrary; see e.g. Perris (2011, especially 2–4) on the difficulty of isolating this function.

This study falls into four parts. I shall begin with a brief discussion of those few traits shared by 'classes' of anonymous characters identified by the same titles (e.g. Servants, Nurses, and Heralds). The second and most substantial section of this study consists of detailed analyses of individual passages in which a particular nameless figure contributes to the characterization of a particular hero. I then examine three exceptional cases that explore the boundaries between anonymity and naming, and conclude with a brief comparative overview of the uses of anonymity in some related genres. First, however, there are several important general points to be made.

To begin with, I wish to establish my approach to the much-discussed subject of characterization. Characterization and plot are interdependent in any dramatic work[20] and their relative importance varies not only according to historical context, but also from play to play and indeed from scene to scene. Greek tragedy is not consistent in its focus on characterization; however, there is no extant play that does not devote at least some time to the presentation of character. With regard to the named heroes I work from the balanced position summarized by Easterling (1973:6): the poet "wishes us to believe in his characters in a deep and serious way," and it is vital to the effectiveness of the play that the heroes are credibly portrayed.[21] My study adds some weight to this view as it examines many scenes which develop some aspect of the hero's characterization without advancing the plot. The willingness of the playwrights to pause the action of the play in order to establish particular traits of the dramatic figures demonstrates the importance of characterization in the genre as a whole.

Just as the tragedians' interest in characterization is not apparent in every scene, it is not apparent in every character. While the principle of credibility applies also to anonymous figures, its importance is diminished in proportion to their subordinate dramatic significance. To use Christopher Gill's terminology, anonymous figures are more often presented as "personalities" than "characters": they tend to be "unique individual[s]" who invite an "empathetic" response rather than assessment as "psychological and moral agents."[22] Many anonymous characters, including those who play the most active roles in the plot, are characterized primarily by loyalty, an inherently self-effacing trait. When they are given additional attributes, these are

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20 Cf. e.g. Pfister (1988:160), Gould (1978:62).

21 Cf. e.g. Garton (1957), Easterling (1973, 1977b and 1990), Gould (1978), Conacher (1981), Silk (2000:213–214), Seidensticker (2009).

22 Gill (1990a:2).

straightforward, so that there is more scope for appreciation than for discussion of their portrayal. They are plausibly presented, but never in such a way as to distract the audience from the main business of the play. However, they are often key to guiding moral evaluation of the named heroes.

While this dramatic technique is of interest in itself, it is also of more general use in those cases where there is some critical controversy over how certain heroes are portrayed. In such cases, it will be clear which line of scholarly argument I follow; however, the scope of this study generally prevents me from defending the position I adopt with reference to those scenes which do not involve anonymous characters. As far as is possible, I will refer to other critical studies and their bibliographies to compensate for this unavoidable selectivity.

Finally, I recognize that the interpretation of character depends considerably on subjective response, and that this is particularly problematic in dealing with ancient texts. There are certainly other valid readings of many points of detail as well as of the plays as a whole; however, I hope that all readers will agree that this is an indication of the richness that is added to tragedy by even its most elusive and inconspicuous characters, and I hope to encourage their appreciation by bringing them for the moment under the spotlight.

CHAPTER ONE

CLASSES

Anonymous characters are above all tailored to the particular requirements of a given play, and it is extremely difficult to classify them; nonetheless it is useful to consider the few common characteristics shared by those characters who hold similar positions in 'life.' The most interesting dramatic use is made of the least prepossessing figures: the Household or Personal Servants. I include in this category Aegisthus' Servant in *Choephoroi*, the two Old Servants in *Trachiniae*, the Servant in *Helen* who confronts his master, the Maidservant in the prologue of *Andromache*, the two Servants in *Alcestis*, the Servant of Hyllus in *Heracleidae*, Clytaemestra's old Servant in *IA*, the Old Man in *Hippolytus*, and various ἐξάγγελοι.[1] A significant subset of these Personal Servants are the Nurses and Tutors, who stand in a distinctive relationship with their masters that is skilfully exploited by the poets. All of these can be contrasted with those subordinates who are given specific occupations outside the household, such as the Watchman in *Agamemnon*, the Spy in *Septem*, the Watchman in *Antigone*, the Messenger in *Trachiniae*, the Shepherds in *OT*, the Sailor in *Philoctetes*, the Doorkeeper and the Sailor in *Helen*, the Phrygian in *Orestes*, the Charioteer in *Rhesus*, and most other Messengers. A striking subclass is that of the Heralds, who act as explicit representatives of absent heroes and so lend themselves particularly well to the characterization of their masters. In a class of their own are those few characters who serve divine masters; the relationship between the anonymous Priests of tragedy and their gods is at once the most devoted and the least intimate of all the servant-master pairs. Finally, I will consider the role played by anonymous children, who on the Greek tragic stage lack any distinct individuality but who give useful insights into the characterization of the adults around them.

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[1] Cf. p. 10 n. 5 below.

1. Personal Servants

> "I am the perfect servant. I have no life."
>
> Mrs. Wilson, Housekeeper, "Gosford Park" (2001)

Many anonymous characters in tragedy belong to the hero's household. Although it is sometimes made explicit that these figures are slaves, this is not of great importance, as it is the personal and dramatic subordination of anonymous characters to their masters that is stressed rather than any technical bond.[2] I therefore use the term 'Servant'[3] for any of the host of household servants commonly identified as δοῦλος, δούλη, θεράπων, θεράπαινα, πρόσπολος, δμώς, οἰκέτης, λάτρις, πρέσβυς, and variants.[4] These humblest of characters make only brief appearances, rarely appearing on stage for more than one scene. They are distinct from other types of anonymous characters in that they tend to have a negligible effect on the action, neither advancing the plot nor providing important new information;[5] they are introduced into the plays solely to emphasize a particular aspect of the poet's interpretation. Such figures are most common in Euripides, but they can also be found in Aeschylus and Sophocles, and a brief look at an example from each playwright will illustrate the variety of uses to which such characters can be put.

Aegisthus' Servant in *Choephoroi* is onstage for fewer than twenty lines (875–891). Although his cries summon Clytaemestra and warn her of danger, this has little or no effect on the action of the play; the death cries that have alerted the chorus and the audience could easily perform this additional function. The Servant's panic, however, heightens the tension of the

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[2] Cf. p. 5 above.

[3] The fact of servitude also overrides the importance of gender. Male servants are more often associated with heroes and female servants with heroines, but the subordinate's gender is almost never specifically referred to (with the exception of *Andr.* 85) and has only a minimal effect on their relationships. Distinguishing terms such as 'Maidservant' are therefore useful for ease of identification, but have little significance for interpretation.

[4] On the interchangeability of these terms, see e.g. Geiss (1956).

[5] The obvious exceptions to this are the Servant-messengers, particularly the ἐξάγγελοι who enter from the *skene* (such as those in *Antigone*, *HF*, *Medea*, etc.) to describe events within the house. Many of these are or can be assumed to be house servants, which accounts for their presence within the house; however, they are almost invariably called 'Messenger' or ἐξάγγελος by directors and scholars instead of 'Servant,' and their appearances and functions are usually limited to the conventions of messenger-speeches.

scene before the climactic confrontation between mother and son. More importantly, his consequent incoherence allows Aeschylus to demonstrate the quickness and the forcefulness of Clytaemestra's reaction; not only does she immediately solve the riddle that he speaks, but she also commands: δοίη τις ἀνδροκμῆτα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος (889). The Servant's warning does not come early enough to produce any results, and she faces Orestes unarmed; however, her demand for a "man-slaying" weapon reveals the fierce tenacity of her nature,[6] and seriously undermines her subsequent attempts to plead with Orestes on the grounds of the bond between them. Aeschylus therefore uses the Servant's brief appearance to expose Clytaemestra's fundamental ruthlessness in the moments before her final performance for her son.

An equally minor but instructive role is played by the Old Man who enters at the end of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, presiding with Hyllus over the first appearance of the hero whose absence has been the focus of almost the entire play. His urgent commands that Heracles should be left asleep both counterpoint and heighten the effect of Hyllus' uncontrolled outbursts of grief.[7] His insistence that sleep is better than wakefulness[8] also recalls the earlier scene between Lichas and Deianeira (481–482); just as the herald explains that he kept his mistress in ignorance to protect her from emotional pain, so the Old Man works to maintain his master's unconsciousness of physical pain, anticipating the hero's own misery at his waking (1004–1009, 1242).[9] The scene also prepares the audience for the severity of the consequences of Heracles' awakening; the Old Man's solicitude is inseparable from his fear of what his "savage-minded" master might do (975).

The Servant in Euripides' *Helen*, by contrast, demonstrates an almost suicidal loyalty,[10] physically (1629) intercepting his master as he tries to enter

[6] It is worth noting that she does not call for a bodyguard, but for a weapon.

[7] This contrastive effect is complemented by the staging if, as argued convincingly by Winnington-Ingram (1969), Hyllus enters not from the *parodos* with the procession but from the house.

[8] Cf. also the prologue to *Orestes*, especially 131–189, 211–214, 217.

[9] This anticipation may even be extended to an endorsement of Heracles' resolve to die. Although the text of 1018–1020 is badly corrupted, the sense of the whole is clear; he believes Hyllus is best able to "save" Heracles. The meaning of σῴζειν is usually pressed to mean 'help' and so 'restrain from harming himself'; however, the audience might also hear in the Old Man's words the suggestion that Hyllus should "save" Heracles from suffering in the fatal way that the hero has just been suggesting (1013–1017).

[10] The Servant is often identified as Theonoe's, as he is acting in her defence. Yet there is no reason why his willingness to die πρὸ δεσποτῶν (1640) should not include Theoclymenus as well. As Theonoe herself says when agreeing to help Helen and Menelaus, it is possible to benefit Theoclymenus "without seeming to" (1020). While the Servant is certainly trying

the house in search of Theonoe (1627–1641).[11] His sudden appearance and the extremity of his demonstration of loyalty (especially 1639–1641)[12] are in keeping with the tone of the play; however, his intervention accomplishes nothing. It is the divine command of Castor and Polydeuces at 1642 that stops Theoclymenus, and the deletion of the Servant scene would not affect the conclusion of the play.

This scene, however, is an important demonstration not only of Theoclymenus' violence, but also of his sense of entitlement. Although the audience has been prepared by Helen to expect such negative qualities,[13] the Egyptian king's first onstage appearance does not emphasize them.[14] Though they are implied in his first speech (1171–1183) confirming the reports of his hostility to the Greeks and the strength of his desire for Helen, he is immediately calmed by the sight of her and then entirely taken in by her ruse. The ensuing scene presents him not only as a victim of deception but as a strikingly generous one; he will spare no expense for Helen's sake (1254), and all of Menelaus' requests—a sacrificial animal, bedding, arms and armour, provisions, a ship, and a crew—are immediately granted. There are no further indications of hostility in his welcome to 'Menelaus' representative' (1280 ff.), or of the threatened violence that caused Helen to cling to Proteus' tomb (63–65), or of any other tyrannical or impious behaviour. Instead, he receives the news of Menelaus' death soberly (1197),[15] pities Priam and Troy (1220), respects the principle of reciprocity (1234), and finally tries to console Helen (1285–1287). Thus, when he laments his deception by the "women's wiles" (1621) not only of Helen but also of his own sister, there is real potential for the audience to sympathize with Theoclymenus rather than the Greek heroes. In the exchange with the

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to save his mistress from death, he is equally trying to prevent his master from doing "great wrong" (1629). It is perhaps also significant that he does not refer to Theonoe other than as the king's sister; he does not forbid Theoclymenus to kill his 'mistress' or the 'prophetess,' but "your sister" (1639).

[11] Although the identity of the speaker has been questioned, I follow (with e.g. Burian, Diggle, Kovacs, and Murray) Clark (1858) in attributing this role to an anonymous Servant who enters from the house at the moment of crisis (contra e.g. Kannicht, Dale, Allan (H)). Cf. Stanley-Porter (1977), who includes a convincing refutation of Kannicht's arguments.

[12] Note, however, that he is willing to die, not to kill. His is not a hero's active defence of innocence (as Karzai (2006:22–23) implies), but a servant's passive resistance. Similar statements are made by the Old Servant in *IA* (312) and by the Old Tutor in *Ion* (850–853); compare also the chorus of *PV* (1063–1070).

[13] Cf. e.g. Hall (1989:112–113, 126) and Allan (H) 58–59.

[14] Cf. Wright (2005a:194–198).

[15] I would retain this line with e.g. Kannicht and Allan (H).

Servant, however, he demonstrates all of the negative qualities already described and so reassures the audience that he deserves the treatment he has received.[16]

Each playwright therefore uses an anonymous Servant to create a very brief scene that does not advance the plot, but influences the audience's perception of one or more named heroes at a critical moment. Although the tone of each interaction is distinctive, this dramatic subordination complements the clear power dynamics of the servant-master relationship.

1.1. *Nurses and Tutors*

The only distinct subset of household servants are the *trophoi*.[17] Like other anonymous characters, they are presented in widely varying circumstances, and these will be examined further in the relevant discussions of Section II. At present, I wish only to consider the dramatic function that distinguishes *trophoi* from other household servants: the suggestion of childlike qualities in the portrayal of a hero.

It is a distinction worth emphasizing, because there is no consensus on which characters should be identified as Nurses and Tutors.[18] Some are indisputable: the list of tragic Nurses must include Cilissa in *Choephoroi*, Hermione's Nurse in *Andromache*, Phaedra's Nurse in *Hippolytus*, and the Nurse in *Medea*. However, I will argue that this last figure is the Nurse of Medea's children, not of Medea herself, and I omit from the list the Old Maidservant who is often identified as Deianeira's Nurse. I also suggest that the Pythia in *Ion* should be considered in this light as well; though

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16 The same effect might have been achieved by bringing Theonoe herself back onstage; however, this would drastically change the balance of the play, cf. Burnett (1971:97).

17 I group Nurses and Tutors together as τροφοί. Because of the comparatively small number of examples and the variety of circumstance, it is difficult to argue convincingly for any significant effect produced by gender on their relationships with their (former) charges, let alone the specific effects of the various permutations of male and female carers and charges; cf. p. 10 n. 3 above. For an overview of the historical roles of Nurses and Tutors, see e.g. Schulze (1998) and bibliography.

18 Since the tragic nurse is a τροφός and not, so far as we can tell, a ταμία (housekeeper) or a τίτθη/τιθήνη (wet-nurse) like her epic and historical counterparts, we must consider the particular relationship of the servant to her (former) charge, rather than to the household or its head. Although stewardship may have been an important element of the nurse's role in epic, as Karydas argues (1998:2, chapter 1 *passim*), there is no indication of this in tragedy. On the rarity of the wet-nurse in Greek literature (in contrast to Roman) see Vilaitte (1991:10–13) (although she draws unconvincing sociological conclusions from this). Cf. also Molinos Tejada (2005) who argues against the distinction between τροφός and τίτθη/τιθήνη. For a broader survey of sources for the Greek nurse, cf. Rühfel (1988).

it would be excessive to refer to her as Ion's Nurse, this role is essential to her dramatic function and closely connected to her servitude to Apollo.

The identification of Tutors is still more difficult, as the circumstances in which they are presented vary so widely. In fact, it is arguable that the Tutor in Sophocles' *Electra* is the only one whose identity as a παιδαγωγός is clearly developed, though the term is never used to describe him. The Tutor in *Medea* does not interact with his young charges, while in Euripides' *Electra* and *Ion* the servants who attend their heroes are in fact the tutors of their dead fathers, and, as we shall see, their age seems to place them in a different relationship to their young masters. There is one other παιδαγωγός identified by the manuscripts and the scholiasts; however, the text does not identify the servant who attends Antigone and delivers the *teichoskopia* in the prologue of the *Phoenissae*.[19] Mastronarde (P) (*ad* 88 pers. nota) insists that, as he cannot be Antigone's Tutor, "he is to be termed θεράπων or perhaps πρέσβυς/πρεσβύτης as in *El.* or *Ion*," and this view has been adopted by most scholars since. However, I suggest that it is not the character's 'biography' that is most important for interpretation, but his dramatic function and connection to the hero to whom he is attached, and it is these criteria that should determine our identification of these figures.

In the most straightforward cases, Nurses and Tutors are immediately identified as such by the chorus, as in *Choephoroi* (τροφὸν δ' Ὀρέστου τήνδ' ὁρῶ, 731) and *Hippolytus* (ἥδε τροφὸς γεραιά, 170). However, the word παιδαγωγός is not used in Sophocles' *Electra* or in *Medea*, though the relationship is clearly indicated by ἐξεθρεψάμην (S. *El.* 13) and τέκνων ὀπαδὲ πρέσβυ τῶν Ἰάσονος (*Med.* 53) respectively. Other figures, such as Hermione's Nurse in *Andromache*, are still less clearly identified; though she counts herself as one of Hermione's "old friends" (ἠθάδων φίλων, 818–819),[20] there is no explicit reference to a *trophos* relationship.

One possible indication of such a relationship is the repeated use of the forms of address τέκνον and παῖ.[21] To be sure, such vocatives are hardly

[19] On the authenticity of the scene, see e.g. Mastronarde (P) 168–173, Burgess (1988).

[20] Wilamowitz' emendation of 842 also has Hermione address the Nurse as ὦ φίλα; this, however, has been proved metrically implausible (cf. Stevens *ad* 841–844).

[21] I treat the two terms as equivalents; see Dickey (1996:65–72 with bibliography) on prose usage. These are used more often to female than to male heroes by *trophoi* figures. To women: Nurse to Phaedra, *Hipp.* 203, 212, 223, 238, 288, 297, 338, 340, 348, 350, 353, 473, 517, 521, 705; Nurse to Hermione, *Andr.* 828, 832, 866, 878; Tutor to Electra, E. *El.* 516, 533, 567, 657; Tutor to Creousa, *Ion* 765. θύγατερ is used by the Tutor at E. *El.* 493, 663, and at *Ion* 735, 763, 925, 942. To men: Tutor to Orestes, S. *El.* 79, E. *El.* 605; Priestess to Ion, *Ion* 1320. The Nurse in *Medea* also

an exclusive characteristic of *trophoi*, for they are used very frequently by choruses and by other older characters, both anonymous[22] and named. However, it is certainly significant that these vocatives are never used by the Old Maidservant in *Trachiniae*, nor by the Nurse in *Medea* towards Medea herself. Although not every character who uses the word "child" is a *trophos*, we must be suspicious of any supposed nurse who does not.

There are a variety of ways in which *trophoi* can influence the portrayal of their (former) charges as well as different kinds of childlike qualities. As is usual in dealing with anonymous characters, we must examine each individually. I shall consider first those figures that are unambiguously identifiable as *trophoi* and then turn to more contested cases.

Cilissa in *Choephoroi* never interacts with Orestes; however, the reminiscent section of her speech (*Ch.* 749–763) is full of extremely vivid and intimate detail. It is not unusual for a grieving parent or carer to include, in a lament for a dead or dying child of any age, memories of his birth or infancy;[23] however, Cilissa is unique in focusing only on Orestes' infancy and making no allusion to his childhood, adulthood or his (apparently) missed future. Orestes' own absence during the scene contributes to this effect, for the image of the baby of Cilissa's memory is not challenged by the presence of the young man he has become.[24]

Sophocles' Tutor, by contrast, draws upon no touching memories of Orestes' childhood; instead, the relationship between the two is demonstrated in their interactions. The opening 'geography lesson' immediately evokes the tutor-student relationship.[25] The Tutor is the first to speak,[26] and he uses a verbal adjective in -τέον (16) and an imperative (21) in pressing the young man to lay out his strategy.[27] His position, however, is clearly

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addresses the boys as such at 82, 89, 98, 118, but as they are in fact children, this is unsurprising. Reciprocal expressions from the charges, such as Phaedra's μαῖα at *Hipp.* 243 and 311 and Ion's response to the Pythia at 1321, further encourage the perception of a persistent carer-child relationship.

[22] E.g. the Merchant/Sailor to Neoptolemus (*Phil.* 589), the Old Man to Hippolytus (*Hipp.* 107), the Old Man to Hyllus (*Trach.* 974, 981).

[23] E.g. S. *El.* 1143–1148, *Rh.* 917–918, E. *Supp.* 1134–1135, *HF* 458–459, *Med.* 1029–1031.

[24] For discussion of the importance of this representation see pp. 132–133 below.

[25] See also pp. 62–63 below. Cf. Kitzinger (1991:302–304) and Finglass (89) who points out the similarity with the opening of *Philoctetes*.

[26] Compare especially Athena and Odysseus (*Ajax*), but also Oedipus and the Priest (*OT*), Antigone and Ismene (*Antigone*), Odysseus and Neoptolemus (*Philoctetes*), Oedipus and Antigone (*OC*).

[27] Cf. Finglass *ad* 16.

subordinate; Orestes' first words emphasize the Tutor's servile status, commending him as φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων (23)[28] while his appreciative simile casts him as an old horse.[29] The Tutor urges Orestes forward and follows καὐτὸς ἐν πρώτοις (28), but he does not choose or lead the way. Although the pupil invites his old tutor to point out any flaws even before he begins to explain his strategy (31), he does not comment upon the plan at all. He does, however, do everything in his power to ensure its success, intervening with unexpected authority at two crucial moments in the play to influence Orestes' and Electra's actions.[30] Both heroes obey his exhortations almost instantly; it is clear that, in spite of the passage of time, he is still the παιδαγωγός with comparable authority over the charges in his care.

Euripides' *trophoi* are less masterful; they are marked not so much by the authority that they once possessed over the child as by intimacy with the adult. Both are suggested in *Andromache* by the mingled disapproval and concern of Hermione's Nurse; however, she is completely unable to influence her hysterical mistress. She appears on stage having failed to calm her and asking the assistance of the chorus to do so (815–819), while her interposed questions and reassurance are barely acknowledged in her mistress' increasingly fevered lyrics.[31] Yet her lack of authority does not diminish the indications of intimacy between them, particularly the Nurse's reproaches (828, 836, 852–853, 866–868) and her concern for her charge's modesty (832, 876–878). Furthermore, though Hermione does not react to the Nurse's concluding speech, the audience is not so unresponsive. The exasperated patience of this speech, which highlights Hermione's tendency to excessive emotion (866–868), encourages us to put the heroine's fears into perspective and to question the validity of her position; not only is Hermione's suffering the result of her own actions, but her reaction is irrational and her fears exaggerated (869–875). Euripides therefore skilfully uses the Nurse to show Hermione, the cruel bully of the first half of the play, as no more than a foolish and wilful child.[32]

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28 Contrast the praise of Pylades as φίλτατε ξένων (15).

29 Finglass *ad* 25–28 gives four classical examples of "the horse which shows its spirit as it prepares for action," but all save the Apollonius presents the horse as yoked, bridled, and/or waiting for the trumpet—distinct signs of domestication and subordination.

30 Cf. pp. 63 and 66 below.

31 Cf. Mastronarde (1979:116).

32 This reading argues for the coherence of the portrayal of Hermione as a bully-coward. Compare Allan (2000:104–108); note the repetition of the word 'young' in his description of the Hermione of the second half.

The first scene between Phaedra and her Nurse in *Hippolytus* begins in a superficially similar way. The Nurse shows similar concerns for her mistress' well-being and reputation (e.g. 203–207, 212–214) as well as marked affection (e.g. 188, 252–260). In her delirium, Phaedra pays no more heed to her Nurse than Hermione does to hers, and is almost as unresponsive when she returns to her senses. However, their subsequent interactions reveal a reciprocal familiarity that is not demonstrated in *Andromache*; the Nurse badgers, prompts, and accepts but overrides her charge's reproaches, while Phaedra never commands, but entreats, answers, and finally yields. The impression is that of a relationship substantially unchanged by age, and Euripides uses this to show Phaedra as childlike not in immaturity, but in innocent trust and susceptibility. The clearest example of this is Phaedra's use of the word μαῖα at crucial moments (243 and 311), adding a touch of naivety and pathetic vulnerability first to her remorse for her fevered outburst, and then to her involuntary response to Hippolytus' name. In both cases, her failure to adhere to her determined course of silent suffering is softened by a childish cry[33] that ensures the audience's compassion. Her trust in her Nurse culminates in her implicit consent to the fetching of the suspiciously vague "love-charm," in spite of her apprehensions and the Nurse's evasiveness.

When she learns that this trust is broken, however, the relationship is changed, and all suggestions of the childlike disappear. In her second exchange with the Nurse, it is Phaedra who takes the role of authority; her earlier entreaties are now commands, and her plaintive reproaches are curses. The Nurse's excuses are dismissed, as is her attempt to return to their earlier relationship with the use of τέκνον (705)—her last word. After Phaedra's rejection, the Nurse leaves behind her not her former charge, but her mistress.[34]

In *Medea*, there is no particular need for the *trophoi* to emphasize that their charges are still children; there are accordingly few opportunities to consider the relationship between them, as the children are silent throughout the relevant scenes. The Tutor in particular seems to function primarily as a shepherd; although he is identified as their παιδαγωγός (49, 1020), he never speaks to them nor does he provide information about them from his own experience. His mild comment on the news of their exile (73) contrasts strongly with the Nurse's reaction (74–84), and he expresses no alarm at her

33 Cf. Dale (A) *ad* 393–415.

34 Cf. Karydas (1998:174–175). See Section II.3.1 below for further discussion of the Nurse's role.

fears for the children, focusing instead on their parents. The Nurse is considerably more demonstrative and addresses them earnestly in their absence as well as in their silent presence, calling them φίλοι παῖδες (98) and attempting to reassure them (89). Above all, she emphasizes their vulnerability (82, 90–94, 99–105, 116–118) and their innocence (74–75, 95, 116–117). Her relationship to the children is therefore clear, although they are not directly in her care.

However, there is no evidence that she ever served as Medea's nurse.[35] She refers to her always as δέσποινα (6, 17, 58, 142, 172, 185), or with pitying substantives (e.g. ἡ δύστηνος (20), ἡ τάλαινα (34)), and she never recollects or refers to a time before Jason's arrival at Colchis. We never see the Nurse interact with Medea,[36] nor even hear an account of specific interaction. Although she leaves the stage in order to persuade her mistress to speak to the chorus (180–184), Medea makes no mention of this when she appears at 214.[37] Nor is the Tutor's question at line 52 any indication of Medea's dependence on the Nurse;[38] the exaggerated terms are slightly facetious and the Nurse does not answer it, but later explicitly describes Medea's hostility to the servants, including herself in their number (187–189). Furthermore, the Nurse never fears for her mistress; there is certainly pity, but there is no trace of protectiveness, nor even the tenderness expressed, for example, by Alcestis' Maidservant. That the speaker is Medea's servant is clear, but there is no indication at all that she was ever her Nurse.[39] We are therefore never made to think of Medea as a child herself, with all the attendant implications of vulnerability and subordination.

Sophocles' Deianeira is no Medea, and is certainly portrayed as both vulnerable and naïve;[40] however, the Old Maidservant of the opening scene

[35] Cf. Page lvi, Elmsley 240: "melius fortasse legeretur ΓΡΑΥΣ vel ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ quam ΤΡΟΦΟΣ."

[36] The command at 820–823 can hardly be defined as meaningful interaction, even if the silent, female servant is identifiable as the speaker of the prologue, which is not at all certain; cf. e.g. Mastronarde (M) 43–44.

[37] I consider it unlikely that the Nurse returns with her at 214 as a silent attendant, as Kovacs indicates in his Loeb (cf. Mastronarde (M) 43); however, even if she does so, her silence in her mistress' presence, after her freedom of expression in the prologue, would hardly suggest any intimacy between them.

[38] Contra Gredley (1987:29, n. 7), who also tries unconvincingly to compare 49 (παλαιὸν οἴκων κτῆμα δεσποίνης ἐμῆς) to *Hipp.* 267 (γύναι γεραιά, βασιλίδος πιστὴ τροφέ).

[39] Nor is there any reason to see her as "foreign" or "in exile," e.g. Luschnig (2007: chapter 6).

[40] See March (1987) on the probability of Sophocles' innovation in this portrayal of Deianeira, and the consequent importance of the early establishment of these traits.

of *Trachiniae* does not emphasize these aspects of her character.[41] She does not call her παῖ or τέκνον, but opens her speech with the formal address δέσποινα Δηάνειρα (49). She is described only as an old woman (870, 873), and there is no indication that she has accompanied her mistress from her home, or that, in spite of her concern in the prologue, she has a particularly close relationship with her; indeed, Deianeira's description of her to Hyllus (61–63) suggests quite the opposite. Karydas finds evidence of her "authority" in the fact that she gives advice to Deianeira (1998:79); however, in stark contrast to the familiar style adopted by the *trophoi* so far discussed in speaking to their charges, we find her emphatically deferential, especially at 52–53 and 59. There could be nothing less authoritative than her apologies for her boldness in giving advice, or the delicacy of her phrasing. Her manner is comparable to that of the Old Man in *Hippolytus* (who to my knowledge has never been called Hippolytus' Tutor). Most strikingly, when the Servant reports the death of Deianeira at 871 ff.,[42] she does so without faltering, lamentation, or reference to her own suffering; it is the chorus that mourns the dead. She is therefore a Servant with no particular privilege or history, not a Nurse watching over a charge.

By contrast, the Pythia in *Ion* can be helpfully identified as a Nurse. She is specifically described as the τροφός of Creousa's child (49, 319, 321, 1358) and indeed is never mentioned solely in her capacity as priestess; the two roles are parallel throughout the play,[43] for though she does not know it she is serving Apollo by raising his child (cf. 1357–1358). Thus, when she suddenly appears and introduces herself elaborately with the only specific mention of her priestly role, she is also carrying the cradle that will be described at 1337. It is no coincidence that she is greeted in return by Ion not as a priestess but as φίλη μοι μῆτερ, οὐ τεκοῦσά περ (1324). She not only accepts this emendation (1325) but phrases her farewell to him in similar terms (ἴσον γάρ σ' ὡς τεκοῦσ' ἀσπάζομαι, 1363).[44] The reminders of the hero's infancy, both physical and verbal (e.g. 1339, 1351), and the affection demonstrated by both

41 The scene is focused instead on what Waldock (1966:90) calls her "extraordinary passivity"; cf. Section II.2.2 below. See e.g. Fitzpatrick (2000), Easterling (1977b:123) on the Servant's part in this (though both refer to her as 'Nurse').

42 It is probable that she would be recognized, cf. Easterling *ad* 868–870. Barrett (2002:76–81) points out the unusual emphasis on her autopsy of Deianeira's death; however, this is nowhere ascribed to a particular relationship between her and her mistress.

43 Cf. p. 28 below.

44 I would follow (with e.g. Diggle, Kovacs) Hirzel's deletion of 1364–1368, but even if these final lines are retained the pairing of the Pythia and Apollo at 1367–1368 as 'surrogate parents' has similar implications.

Ion and his 'Nurse' help to direct the audience's perception of the hero at this crucial moment; as in *Choephoroi*, the horror of matricide is mitigated by the confusion of the mother figure.

Another contributor to the prevalent theme of true, false, and surrogate parenthood in this play is the Old Man who accompanies Creousa at her second appearance, and is immediately identified as her father's Tutor (ὦ πρέσβυ παιδαγώγ' Ἐρεχθέως πατρὸς / τοὐμοῦ, 725–726).[45] His identity and their mutual tenderness are very deliberately established in his initial slow progression towards the stage; Euripides pauses the action of the play from 725–746 to show the genuinely affectionate, reciprocal relationship that exists between mistress and servant. There is, however, a significant difference between this and other *trophos* scenes: the emphasis is not on Creousa's youth, but on the Old Tutor's old age. He uses the vocative τέκνον only once (765), otherwise preferring the rarer and less age-specific θύγατερ (735, 763, 925, 942). Despite his great affection for Creousa, he is above all conscious of her forebears (e.g. 735–737, 809–811, 813–814, 966, 968). His dramatic function is therefore not primarily as a *trophos* figure, focused on Creousa, but as an old associate and supporter of the autochthonous Erechtheid household to which she belongs.[46]

The same can be said of the Old Tutor in Euripides' *Electra*, who is still further removed from his "mistress" (πότνι' ἐμὴ δέσποινα, 487). Though he is repeatedly defined as a Tutor, he is identified not in relation to Orestes and Electra but to Agamemnon. Although it is very rare that nameless characters are mentioned in their absence, he is described not once but three times before his entrance, and in each, though it is clear that his most memorable action was the rescue of Orestes, he is always defined first as Agamemnon's τροφεύς or παιδαγωγός.[47] When he finally does arrive—with some emphasis on the infirmity of his old age (489–492)—he asks for Electra as the child of Agamemnon ὅν ποτ' ἐξέθρεψ' ἐγώ (488), and does not mention his rescue of Orestes until 540. Similarly, Electra introduces him to 'Orestes' messenger' not as his 'master's' rescuer, but as the man who raised her father (555). The Old Tutor's loyalty to the heroes is unquestioned, yet there is no intimacy between them; he has not seen Orestes since childhood and the only

45 Cf. Zacharia (2003:26), though the parallels she draws between the Tutor and Erechtheus are tenuous.

46 See Section II.3.2 below for further discussion.

47 πατρὸς γεραιὸς […] τροφεύς, 16; πατρός γε παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων, 287; παλαιὸν τροφέ' ἐμοῦ φίλον πατρός, 409.

memory he recounts—the fall that gave him the telltale scar—is vague, almost perfunctory (573–574).[48] Though he calls Electra θύγατερ (493, 563) he has not seen her in a long time (504). His relationship with Agamemnon's children is therefore minimal, despite his devotion to the household.[49]

The interaction between Antigone and the old servant in *Phoenissae*, however, is distinctly reminiscent of other *trophos* relationships. Although she never specifies his relationship to her, he addresses her as παρθένε (106), τέκνον (139, 193) and παῖ (154), while the didactic and catechistic format of the *teichoskopia* strongly suggests a paedagogical role. His extreme concern for her reputation (89–95, 99, 193–201) exceeds those of the Nurses of Phaedra and Hermione, while Antigone's request for his physical aid in climbing the wall (103–105) shows that though he is γεραιός, she is still the dependent. It is certainly true that Antigone is relatively unimportant in the play; nevertheless, this anonymous character does serve to emphasize Antigone's childlike qualities of uncertainty and vulnerability, and he can therefore be identified as 'Tutor,' in defiance of strict ancient custom, without misleading the reader.

The *trophoi* of tragedy therefore vary considerably in both influence over and intimacy with their masters. Nevertheless, the identification of a Nurse or Tutor encourages the perception of the (former) charge as somehow childlike, regardless of his current age, through the memory or persistence of the relationship between them. This dramatic function has important implications for the interpretation of the plays, and should be a primary criterion in our identification of anonymous servants as *trophoi*.

2. Other Servants

In contrast to the servants who personally attend their masters, there are a number of servants who, while attached to the central household, do not necessarily live within it and whose occupations are more clearly defined. These figures, including guards, shepherds, and sailors—are much more likely than personal servants to be primarily functional; most of them are in fact messengers. This is unsurprising, as their distinct occupations account

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48 Compare the recognition of Odysseus' scar and the extensive flashback that it triggers at *Od.* 19.390 ff.

49 See Section II.2.7 below for further discussion.

for their presence during important offstage events, while their attachment to the house gives some motivation for their decision to bring a report. As stated above,[50] it is beyond the scope of the present study to add to the scholarship on the messenger speech, and I will consider only the non-narrative functions of 'reporting figures' such as the Watchman in *Antigone*, the Messenger in *Trachiniae*, and the Phrygian in *Orestes*. In addition to these, I will consider non-messenger figures such as the Watchman in *Agamemnon*, the Doorkeeper in *Helen*, and the Heralds described below.

2.1. *Heralds*

The most distinct nameless figures, in both form and function, are the heralds. Apart from probable visual cues, notably the κηρύκειον,[51] they are explicitly identified as κήρυκες, sent on a errand.[52] This commission distinguishes the herald from other anonymous characters; he is not simply a loyal servant or chance bystander, but an agent commissioned with a specific message to relay or task to perform.[53] Futhermore, heralds represent not an offstage event, as messengers do, but an offstage entity.

In these respects, the Egyptian Herald in Aeschylus' *Supplices*, the Achaean in *Agamemnon*, Eurystheus' in *Heracleidae*, and the Theban[54] in Euripides' *Supplices* are the anonymous brethren of Lichas, Talthybius, and other heralds of epic and history. The roles that they play in tragedy, however, only superficially resemble those of their epic and historical equivalents.

In Homer, heralds often perform ceremonial functions for their allies, such as summons to council, sacrifices, and certain minor domestic services

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50 See p. 6 above.

51 Cf. Manton (1982:2–3), Goblot-Cahen (2007).

52 A. *Supp.* ἴσως γὰρ ἂν κῆρύξ τις ἢ πρέσβη μόλοι / ἄγειν θέλοντες, ῥυσίων ἐφάπτορες (727–728); *Ag.* πάντας προσαυδῶ τόν τ' ἐμὸν τιμάορον / Ἑρμῆν, φίλον κήρυκα, κηρύκων σέβας (514–515); κῆρυξ Ἀχαιῶν [...] τῶν ἀπὸ στρατοῦ (538); *Hcl.* ὁρῶ κήρυκα τόνδ' Εὐρυσθέως (49), πέμπει Μυκηνῶν δεῦρό μ' Εὐρυσθεὺς ἄναξ / ἄξοντα τούσδε (136–137); E. *Supp.* Καδμεῖος [...] κῆρυξ (396–397), κομψός γ' ὁ κήρυξ (426).

53 Cf. e.g. Dickin (2009): 1.

54 Because the Heralds serve only kings, the distinction between the 'Hero's' and the 'Local' Herald is somewhat artificial. However, I slightly prefer 'Argive' or 'Achaean' to 'Agamemnon's' because of the comparative importance of each to his speech; he in fact describes the king only twice, and by Homeric phrases—Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ (523), ἄναξ Ἀτρείδης (530)—that indicate no allegiance stronger than that of the average subject. By contrast, I prefer 'Eurystheus'' because of the Herald's strong insistence on the name (e.g. 49, 57–58, 68, 105).

such as the pouring of wine. When they treat with enemies, their roles are strictly passive; either they serve as escorts to their leaders or they convey their messages, usually repeating them word for word.[55] They are not, however, tasked to perform any active commission, nor do they take it upon themselves even to enact their leaders' policies.[56] Even when Agamemnon sends his heralds to fetch Briseis from Achilles, he declares: "εἰ δέ κε μὴ δώῃσιν, ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕλωμαι / ἐλθὼν σὺν πλεόνεσσι" (*Il.* 1.324–325); he does not expect Talthybius and Eurybates to attempt to enforce his will.

The responsibilities of the historical herald of later times were similarly fundamentally passive, their roles and powers strictly limited by convention.[57] The herald's conventional inviolability was in part a reflection of his impotence; one man alone in an enemy environment had no chance of effecting anything by force, and so was no threat.[58] Apart from the relaying of simple messages, their most frequent duty was to arrange truces and safe-conducts; they were not even authorized to negotiate.[59] Because of the passivity of their functions, their roles in diplomatic enterprises were essentially mechanical and their significance as individuals minimized. In epic and historical works, therefore, heralds tend to be very colourless entities—often anonymous—who function not as modern diplomats but as the impersonal medium of diplomacy.[60]

By contrast, the anonymous heralds of tragedy are distinctly characterized and play active and extensive roles in the plays. Their portrayal is not complex; indeed, each Herald is almost a caricature of a trait. The Egyptian is violent and barbarous, the Achaean war-weary; Eurystheus' is petty, the Theban arrogant and disputatious. Only the Herald of *Agamemnon* is assigned to convey a report to his allies; the others all arrive as representatives of the antagonists of the central figures, demanding the surrender of

55 Cf. Mosley (1973:88).

56 Perhaps the only independent action undertaken by heralds in epic is the interference of Idaios and Talthybius in the duel of Hector and Ajax at *Il.* 7.273–282.

57 Cf. Mosley (1973:84–89), Russell (1999:70–77).

58 Cf. Goblot-Cahen (1999:187–188), who emphasizes the religious aspect of this convention. I have not been able to consult her 2005 dissertation, *Les hérauts grecs et la genèse du politique*, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne.

59 Cf. Wéry (1967:174).

60 Aeschylus' *Supplices*, which presents perhaps the most unorthodox herald of extant tragedy, refers ironically to these traditionally passive functions (e.g. χώραν οὔτε κηρύκων ὕπο / ἀπρόξενοί τε νόσφιν ἡγητῶν μολεῖν (238–239); καὶ γὰρ πρέπει κήρυκ' ἀπαγγέλλειν τορῶς / ἕκαστα (931–932)). The closest tragic parallels to epic/historical heralds are mute as well as anonymous, such as the Athenian in Euripides' *Supplices* whose silence is a contrast to the Theban's boldness.

suppliants.[61] However, in defiance of epic and historical conventions, they do not merely relay their masters' edicts. As we shall see later, Agamemnon's Herald says considerably more than he is intended to; Creon's Herald enters into a full *agon* with Theseus; while both the Egyptian and Eurystheus' Heralds actually attempt to enforce their masters' will and, when thwarted, continue with a bitter verbal assault before returning to report to their heroes.

Both the unusual individuality and the activeness of the tragic Heralds can be traced to the limitations of the dramatic audience's experience to the locations and characters that appear onstage. The audience never acquires the direct access to absent heroes or distant locations that is provided by the narrator in epic and historical texts; the tragic herald therefore acts as the audience's first (and sometimes only) point of contact with the man or the state that has sent him. He is not acting on his own initiative but, as far as we can know, is faithfully carrying out orders. The onstage Herald therefore influences the audience's perception of the offstage sender, and this influence is not limited to the sphere of action; the characterization of the Herald also shapes the audience's assumptions about his master, as both his anonymity and the fundamentally representative nature of his role encourage the audience to associate him with the person or place that he represents. In all four extant cases, the poet uses the Herald to reinforce preexisting expectations, so that the enemy representatives are strongly repellent,[62] while the Achaean is basically sympathetic.

The immense dramatic potential of the Herald, however, lies in the fact that these expectations can be thwarted by the eventual appearance (or other portrayal) of the hero himself. Because he is acting on behalf of an absent character, the audience naturally associates the two; however, if further evidence is presented there is no great difficulty or contradiction in distinguishing them again. The unexpected dignity of Eurystheus in *Heracleidae*, for example, in defiance of the expectations established by the unimpressive behaviour of his Herald, is much simpler and more easily accepted than, for example, Polymestor's transformation from greedy betrayer to blind seer in *Hecuba*, or Hermione's change of heart in *Andro-*

[61] On the pointed irony of the similarity of the sanctity of suppliants and that of the Heralds who try to violate it, cf. Goblot-Cahen (1999:181–184).

[62] Goblot-Cahen (1999:187): "Le tyran servant dans la tragédie de repoussoir, caractérisé par une violence aveugle et sacrilège, le héraut sur scène joue le rôle de son représentant." Although her nominal subject is the tragic herald in general, it is noteworthy that the three examples she uses to come to this conclusion are the three anonymous 'enemy' heralds.

mache. Through the use of a third party, the poet is able to produce a significant and startling shift in the audience's perception of a hero without compromising the plausibility of his characterization.

It is striking that although a named herald could function in the same way, the extant named heralds—Talthybius in *Troades*[63] and *Hecuba*, and Lichas in *Trachiniae*—do not. In both of the plays in which he appears, Talthybius is largely a sympathetic character, carrying out his harsh orders dutifully but with explicit regret.[64] He maintains a personal independence of judgement, if not of action, so that the distinction between himself and the Greek kings is emphasized and he serves as an obvious foil for their ruthlessness. More drastically, Lichas is shown not merely to have lied to Deianeira (346–348), but to have done so on his own initiative (479–483). This striking assertion of his dramatic independence discourages the perception of him as Heracles' representative; it is in fact unclear how far we can accept the narrative he does tell in the light of his admitted deception.[65] Although the scarcity of examples makes it impossible to ascertain, it therefore seems that anonymity is important in making the most of the representative quality of a herald in influencing the audience's perception of an absent hero.

[63] David Kovacs (2011) has recently revived an older argument that the Herald who speaks at 709 is not in fact Talthybius (cf. the scholiast's observation that Hecuba ought to call Talthybius by name). However, in the absence of clear verbal indications, the audience would be hard-pressed to distinguish two (or three) characters who are recognizable as heralds, fulfil very similar functions, and are likely to be played by the same actor. Hecuba's τίν' αὖ δέδορκα τόνδ' Ἀχαιικὸν λάτριν (707) is indeed difficult to explain, as there are few cases to which it can be compared; however, *Hcl.* 638–640 does provides a parallel for an old character failing to recognize a new arrival (though in this case an anonymous slave who has not previously appeared onstage), while 658–659 demonstrates that a τίς question can focus on function rather than identity. It is therefore entirely possible that the failure to recognize is a marker of old age (perhaps a reference to failing vision?) and weakness which would appropriate to both Hecuba in this play and Alcmena in *Heracleidae*.

[64] For *Hecuba* see e.g. Mossman (1995:58, 155). For *Troades*, see e.g. Barlow *ad* 709–798, Gilmartin (1970:214–218), Dyson and Lee (2000) *passim*, Sullivan (2007:476). Conacher's criticism (1967:144) is an unusual exception. Talthybius and his profession are described negatively by Cassandra at *Tro*. 424–426 and by the Messenger at *Or*. 887–897. However, in the first passage, the contrast between his sympathy and Cassandra's criticism of him only heightens the independence of his judgement (cf. Gilmartin (1970:218)). In the latter case, in spite of the biased speaker's claims, Talthybius is not functioning as a herald (cf. Oakley (1992:272)).

[65] See e.g. Davies (1984), Heiden (1988) on the "pervasive and intricate equivocation of Lichas' speech." Although van Erp Taalman Kip (1996) argues persuasively that information not contradicted should be taken at face value, she does not consider the special case of a speaker who admits to some level of deception.

3. Priests

A very small but distinct group of anonymous characters are those who serve a divine rather than a mortal master; however, as there are only three extant examples, one from each poet, it is difficult to generalize. Versions of the Pythia at Delphi appear in *Eumenides* and in *Ion*, playing very different roles, and they are very different again from the Priest of Zeus in the prologue of *OT*.[66] Yet it is striking that these characters act without particular privileges of either power or knowledge; they are neither modern priests nor ancient seers.[67] In fact, these three anonymous priests are emphatically helpless and ignorant. Their particular affiliations, however, add an additional dimension to their interactions with other characters, and are suggestive in the consideration of the role of the divine in these plays.

The Priestess in *Eumenides*, like many other anonymous characters, serves to convey plot-critical information (that Orestes and the Erinyes are in the temple (40 ff.)) and to create atmosphere (first by her calm, and then by her horror and terror at 34); however, she also suggests a particular perception of her master—in this case a positive one.[68] Her long prayer presents him first as part of a prestigious and above all voluntary tradition of divine prophets (1–20). This is the only extant account of Apollo acquiring Delphi peacefully,[69] and the advantages of this version to Aeschylus are evident in a play that seeks to establish the rule of law over violence. The god's leading role in the Pythia's own prophecy is made clear (33), and her final words are an appeal to his abilities as ἰατρόμαντις, τερασκόπος and καθάρσιος (62–63).

So much is evident and unexceptional. What often goes unnoticed, however, is that the Pythia herself shows no sign of divine insight. She is identified in the hypothesis as the Πυθιὰς προφῆτις, and in addition to probable clues from context and costume her mantic responsibilities are explicitly described (29–33). Given these indications and the importance of Apollo's oracle in the trilogy, we might expect her to deliver a speech comparable

[66] The anonymous temple slave who becomes Ion will be considered separately (Section III.3 below), although there are certainly some common points. Hamilton (1985:59 note 20) excludes the Pythia along with other "prophetic characters" in his discussion of Euripidean priests; however, as I will argue, the Pythia of *Ion* is emphatically not prophetic onstage).

[67] Cf. Sabourin (1973:35–40), Burkert (1985:95–98).

[68] See e.g. Roberts (1984, *passim*) on the variability of this portrayal throughout the trilogy.

[69] Cf. e.g. Parke and Wormell (1956:3–5), Sommerstein (E) *ad* 1–63; the emphasis on Zeus' role (17–19) is particularly striking.

to those of divine *prologizomenoi*, or at least to give some hint as to the direction if not the outcome of the play.

She does not. Instead, she is the only prologue-speaker in tragedy who (so to speak) does not 'know' that she is introducing a tragedy; she knows nothing about the imminent events, and certainly less than the audience some hours into the trilogy. This is obvious in her first speech (1–33), for her prayer is as leisurely as it is solemn. She enters the temple in the belief that things will proceed as normal (ὡς νομίζεται, 32); she expects the arrival of enquirers from outside the temple, but does not suspect the presence of a suppliant within it. Her reappearance is startling, especially given her empatically unorthodox mode of progression on hands and knees, which transfers her shock at the discovery of Orestes to the audience and intensifies further her description of the internal scene (34–59).[70] However, it is very clear that unlike the audience she does not recognize either Orestes or the Erinyes; though her *epanorthosis* (47–49) and *aporia* (57–59) are primarily designed to enhance her horror at the appearance of the chorus, they also stress her lack of knowledge. Finally, having delivered her 'messenger speech,' the Pythia offers no insight into the future but leaves the rest entirely in the hands of her master (60) and exits. As Taplin observes (1977:363), "there is a complete break between the exit of the Pythia and the new entry"; there is no contact at all between Apollo and his Priestess.

Aeschylus' Pythia is therefore perhaps the most ignorant character in extant tragedy. This may be a realistic reflection of the Greek perception of oracles; the historical Pythia was by all accounts an ordinary woman except when inspired by the power of the god.[71] However the dramatic effect of her limitation is to emphasize human dependence on divine knowledge and will. The Priestess can only prophesy ὡς ἂν ἡγῆται θεός (33); it is Apollo who decides what to reveal, through and not to her. She sees the Furies but is incapable of either comprehending or dealing with them. Her ignorance suggests both the instrumentality of mortals to immortals and human ignorance of divine interests and intents. Aeschylus therefore uses the Pythia to prepare the audience for the translation of the drama from the human context of the first two plays to its final escalation and resolution on the divine level, in which the judgement of Orestes' case is only a tangential part of the real problem that the gods must address.

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70 Cf. e.g. Taplin (1977:363).

71 See e.g. Stoneman (2011:31–37), Johnston (2008:45–50), Parke and Wormell (1956:34–36).

In Euripides' *Ion*, as I have already argued,[72] the Pythia's divine connection to Apollo is intrinsically bound up in her relationship to his son. This is not immediately apparent; as she finally arrives onstage[73] she places considerable emphasis on her mantic role:

τρίποδα γὰρ χρηστήριον
λιποῦσα θριγκοὺς τούσδ' ὑπερβάλλω ποδὶ
Φοίβου προφῆτις, τρίποδος ἀρχαῖον νόμον
σῴζουσα, πασῶν Δελφίδων ἐξαίρετος. (1320–1323)

This introduction, and the timing of her dramatic appearance during the crucial confrontation between Ion and Creousa, which has something of the *dea ex machina* about it,[74] might lead us to expect that she will speak for Apollo (as Athena eventually does). Instead, Euripides shifts the audience's attention to the Pythia's personal relationship with Ion;[75] it is not until the end of their stichomythic exchange that she refers again to Apollo (1343–1353). In these lines she does indeed speak on the god's behalf, explaining his past and present actions; there are, however, strict limits to her knowledge. Her past actions in preserving the tokens were inspired by the god without her knowledge (1347, 1359), and though she is now able to explain what Apollo wishes she emphasizes that she cannot say why (1360). While she knows that she holds the key to Ion's identity, she does not know the secret itself; in keeping with the famously enigmatic character of Delphic oracles, she gives to the heroes not a verbal but a material riddle to which she herself does not know the answer.

As in Aeschylus, the initial emphasis on the Pythia's mantic role serves only to highlight the limitations of her access to divine knowledge. Her ignorance plays its small part in the wider pattern of partial knowledge and misconstruction that makes up the majority of the play; however, it also contributes significantly to the problematic depiction of Apollo in the play[76] and particularly his desire for secrecy.[77]

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[72] Pp. 19–20 above.

[73] She is one of very few anonymous characters, like the Old Tutor in Euripides' *Electra*, who are mentioned before they appear onstage; on both occasions she is called Apollo's προφῆτις (42, 321).

[74] Cf. Thornburn (2001:231).

[75] Cf. p. 19 above.

[76] For fuller discussion see Zacharia (2003:103–149) and her bibliography at p. 106 note 4.

[77] E.g. 14, 71–73, 1566–1567, 1556, 1596. Particularly striking is the continued secrecy as to Ion's identity even after the conclusion of the play (1601–1603). Cf. e.g. Hartigan (1991:69–70).

By contrast, Sophocles uses the anonymous Priest in *Oedipus Tyrannos* to direct the audience's attention not to the divine, but to the human protagonist. The opening exchange between Oedipus and the Priest serves primarily to give the basic facts assumed in the Sophoclean version of the myth (4–5, 22–30), but also to characterize Oedipus. The Priest, as the representative of the people, is used to establish three crucial aspects of Oedipus' kingship at the beginning of the play: his paternal attitude towards his subjects, the trusting attitude of his subjects towards him, and his characteristic approach to the solution of problems. However, the Priest is no ordinary spokesman, and we must take into account the broader implications of his identity.

The general impact of the scene is quite clear. Oedipus begins the play with the words ὦ τέκνα, in an obvious, self-conscious position of authority compared to the kneeling suppliants (2–3),[78] but with equally obvious personal concern for their worries (6–7, 11–13). The petition itself, apart from the introduction of the suppliants at 16–21 and the description of the plague at 22–30, consists almost exclusively of the expression of blended respect, trust, and expectation, as the Priest focuses on Oedipus' past service and current responsibility to the city in order to urge him to rise to the new challenge.

The Priest, however, places certain surprisingly explicit limits on his praise:

> θεοῖσι μέν νυν οὐκ ἰσούμενόν σ' ἐγὼ
> οὐδ' οἵδε παῖδες ἑζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,
> ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
> κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς. (31–34)

Similarly, he specifies that Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx with divine help (37–39), and at 42–43, he expects him to solve the new problem εἴτε του θεῶν / φήμην ἀκούσας εἴτ' ἀπ' ἀνδρός. Against this background, even ὦ βροτῶν ἄριστ[ε] (46) seems to be a reminder of Oedipus' mortality, emphasizing his limitations as much as his achievements. In the mouth of the Priest this awareness of the divine sphere is not conscious foreboding (as is, for example, the apprehension of the Watchman in *Agamemnon*) or warning (such as the Servant's advice in *Hippolytus*), but appropriate piety.[79]

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[78] Cf. Taplin (2003:88): "It is the gods they supplicate, but the visual picture, as Oedipus stands before them, inevitably suggests that it is him they pray to."

[79] See Dawe *ad* 31 for a slightly different interpretation.

Sophocles is therefore able to raise the question of man's relationship to the gods without suggesting an answer, and without undermining the image of Oedipus' good fortune at this stage in the play.

Yet we must also consider Oedipus' own treatment of the Priest. Although his costume is likely to have been distinctive and recognizable,[80] Oedipus initially addresses him as ὦ γεραιέ (9), which, though perfectly respectful, acknowledges only his venerable age and not his office. The Priest's reply draws attention to this as he emphasizes his position: ἱερεὺς ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός (18). It is very unusual for an anonymous character to introduce himself, and in this case the wording of his introduction places particular emphasis on his role.[81] However, Oedipus never recognizes the Priest as more than an old man speaking on behalf of his young companions and of the city as a whole; indeed, he does not address him again, but speaks generally to the suppliants as a group (58, 142).

This is not an indication of impiety.[82] As he indicates at the end of the prologue, Oedipus knows that the city can only be saved σὺν τῷ θεῷ (146). He never hesitates to call upon divine aid, as represented by both Apollo and Teiresias, either in the past (from Corinth) or in the present.[83] However, he has carefully distinguished the role of the gods in the city's protection from his own, just as the Priest has distinguished prayer to the gods from the supplication of the king. Oedipus does not ask the gods to remove the plague, as the Priest has done (19–21) and the chorus will do (e.g. 158–166), but to teach him how *he* can accomplish this; he does not pray for salvation, but asks for a solution and emphasizes his own action (e.g. 69, 71–72, 77, 145).[84] The divine for him is a source of truth, not an intervening power. As the Priest of Zeus is neither inspired nor (unlike the Pythia and Teiresias) expected to be, he has no particular insight to offer in spite of his special interest in the religious aspect of the city's plight. Oedipus accordingly takes no notice of the Priest's official capacity; religion without revelation is of no use to him.

This perhaps prepares the audience for Oedipus' infamous treatment of Teiresias.[85] The wording of his greeting is suggestive: ὦ πάντα νωμῶν

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[80] Cf. Manton (1982:2–3).

[81] Cf. Dawe ad loc. Kamerbeek ad loc. gives a convincing defence of Bentley's emendation of ἱερεύς for ἱερεῖς.

[82] Cf. Winnington-Ingram (1980:180–184) on the scepticism of both Jocasta and Oedipus.

[83] E.g. 70–71, 77, 80–81, 86, 133, 136, 146 in the prologue alone.

[84] Cf. Knox (1957:14–15).

[85] This argument complements the reading of Paparizos (1990), who considers the foun-

Τειρεσία, διδακτά τε / ἄρρητά τ' οὐράνιά τε καὶ χθονοστιβῆ (300–301). The emphasis is on the breadth of his knowledge, not its divine source; Oedipus' interest in the seer is fundamentally practical. When Teiresias then refuses to share his knowledge, the king's fury at his silence is not restrained by any other considerations.

The relationships between anonymous priests and their divine masters are much more restricted than those of other anonymous figures. The priests are unquestionably devoted to their gods, but they do not have the privileges of intimacy or understanding; the poets use them not to convey insight into the divine, but to emphasize human limitations and ignorance.

4. Children

> πάντα τἀνθρώπων ἴσα·
> φιλοῦσι παῖδας οἵ τ' ἀμείνονες βροτῶν
> οἵ τ' οὐδὲν ὄντες· χρήμασιν δὲ διάφοροι·
> ἔχουσιν, οἱ δ' οὔ· πᾶν δὲ φιλότεκνον γένος.
>
> *HF* 633–636

> πᾶσι δ' ἀνθρώποις ἄρ' ἦν / ψυχὴ τέκν[α].
>
> *Andr.* 418–419

Children in tragedy are victims. They are always helpless, always innocent, and always caught up in their parents' suffering.[86] Children do not, however, become a focus of interest in themselves; they are barely individualized, and always considered as an extension of their parents.[87] They are the vulnerable embodiment of the future; the adult reaction to them depends primarily on whether they represent future danger or future safety.[88] They are used to intensify the suffering of their parents and guardians,[89] and often play a primarily (and obviously) symbolic role. Dramatically speaking, children

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dations of the authority of king and seer and traces them in both the public and personal aspects of this conflict. For a defence of Oedipus' attack on Teiresias, see e.g. Bain (1979), Dawe 8–9.

86 See e.g. Sifakis (1979), Deforge (1998).

87 E.g. Mastronarde (M) *ad* 391: children are never "figures of full dramatic status"; cf. Fantham (1986:268).

88 This may mean either *gerotrophia* or simply the continuation of a line.

89 This is a technique familiar from the lawcourts; cf. Parker *ad* 392–415.

are consistently objectified; we might say that children, particularly the mute ones, are essentially stage properties, fulfilling a role not unlike that of the bow of Heracles in *Philoctetes*.[90] They are crucial to the thematic interests of the plays, but they are scarcely figures, let alone characters.

This is largely due to the fact that most children—the daughters of Oedipus in *OT*, the sons of Polymestor in *Hecuba*, and the sons of Heracles in *Heracleidae* and *HF*—are both silent and anonymous. The only two who are named in the plays (Eurysaces in *Ajax*, Astyanax in *Troades*) are silent and passive.[91] Only in Euripides do children find voices;[92] the sons of Andromache, Alcestis, and Medea are all given a few lines but not names, intensifying pathos at crucial points in their mothers' stories.[93]

This is the full extent of the active role played by Andromache's son. His symbolic importance is more extensive; like many other children he represents the continuation of his parents' bloodlines, future safety for his mother, and a threat to the enemies of his parents, while he is also a particular cause of Hermione's hostility to Andromache.[94] However, his part in the *amoibaion* at 501 ff. has emotive rather than thematic weight. His pleas, uniquely intertwined with his mother's, effectively intensify the pity and terror of the audience; they do not, however, create a 'character' for the child. Though he is eminiently pitiable, his identity—like his fate—is wholly dependent on his mother's, and this is reinforced by the fusion of their lament. Most notably, at the end of the *amoibaion* the child reverts to being a passive symbol, and though addressed by Peleus (722–724, 746) remains silent in the joyous reprieve.

The son of Alcestis plays a slightly more complex role. His and his sister's situation is atypical, as there is no specific threat to the house as a whole and, despite Alcestis' concerns for her daughter, the children are in no par-

[90] I do not wish to suggest that parents in tragedy do not love their children. It would be intolerable to any audience if they did not; we do not need the evidence provided by Golden (1990:82–92) to understand that the Athenians loved their children. However, this is a sociological rather than a dramatic observation.

[91] In the former case, the name has particular semantic significance (*Aj.* 574–576); in the latter, the name is firmly fixed in tradition (cf. Parker 132).

[92] The effect of these voices would be particularly remarkable, especially in the onstage songs of *Alcestis* and *Andromache*, if the parts were indeed delivered by child actors as the majority of scholars now agree (e.g. Sifakis (1979:73–77), Lloyd *ad* 501–544, Parker 131–132, as against e.g. Dale (A) xix–xx).

[93] The boys in Euripides' *Supplices* are, as a (secondary) chorus, omitted from this study of individuals.

[94] E.g. 1249–1251, 26–28, 519–522, 170–176 respectively. Cf. Fantham (1986:268–271), Lloyd ad loc.

ticular danger.[95] Their dramatic function is nonetheless entirely centred on their parents. In silence (371–389) they symbolize the extent of Alcestis' sacrifice;[96] in song (393–415) the son echoes Admetus' language with unsettling implications.[97] As in *Andromache*, there is no question that the son's lament is pathetically effective; though the text is certainly corrupt, it seems to be all that would be expected of such a lament: sincere and moving, with most of the imagery commonly used in tragedy to describe orphaned children.[98] This conventionality does not reduce the pathetic nature of the monody, but it does minimize the particular characterization of the child. It also has important implications for the perception of Admetus.

The boy begins his lamentation with the fact of his mother's death, using conventional language[99] in spite of the unorthodox situation. He therefore closely imitates the conventional language of his father; for example, the child's lament προλιποῦσα δ' ἐμὸν βίον ὠρφάνισεν τλάμων (396–397) echoes Admetus' ἀπωλόμην ἄρ', εἴ με δὴ λείψεις, γύναι (386) and προλείπεις; [...] ἀπωλόμην τάλας (391). However, the child's innocence draws attention to the irony and incongruity (if not the sincerity)[100] of Admetus' use of the same language of lamentation. This suggestive contrast becomes still more pronounced as the boy turns to his father in the antistrophe; for example, his lamentation that Admetus wedded "without profit" (ἀνόνατ' ἀνόνατ', 411) recalls the man's own misapplication of the language of profit to his marriage (e.g. σοῦ γὰρ οὐκ ὠνήμεθα, 335), the irony of which is later pointed out by Pheres (627–628, 699–701). Similarly, the child's final line (415), a figurative declaration of the ruin brought about by Alcestis' loss, throws into sharp relief the similar and deeply ironic statements often repeated

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95 They are almost certainly a Euripidean invention; in the most common version of the story of the self-sacrificing wife, the heroine dies on the day of her wedding—which is to say, as a bride and not as a mother (cf. Lesky 1925:20–42). See Dyson (1988:14–17) for evidence and an astute exploration of the implications of this change, and the consequent symbolic importance of the children.

96 Cf. Slater (2000:111–113), who links this scene with the ceremonial parade of war orphans.

97 The children's initial silence adds to the unexpectedness of the son's song; if it is not the first time a child speaks on a tragic stage, it is certainly the earliest extant instance as well as the longest. (Cf. Parker 130–131.) The sudden breaking of that silence is perhaps an inversion of Admetus' anticipation and lamentation of the approaching death (cf. p. 53 below) and his sudden silence at the moment of death.

98 Cf. Sifakis (1979:68–69, 77–78).

99 Cf. e.g. Alexiou (2002: chapter 8, especially 124, 163–164, 176, 182–184), Garland (2001:30–31, 142–143). That the child's diction here is adult (cf. commentaries ad loc., Dyson (1988:17), Sifakis (1979:69)) only encourages the comparison with Admetus' speech.

100 Cf. e.g. Smith (1960:131), Luschnig (1995:50–51), Murnaghan (1999–2000:113).

by Admetus (e.g. 164–165, 273–274, 277–278, 382, 386, 391) even before the death that has been the literal means of his salvation. The natural simplicity of the child, who does not understand the irony of his words, therefore highlights the unsettling unconsciousness of the grown man who certainly should.

Admetus' only contribution to his son's lament is an instructive one. While the son in *Andromache* alternates lines with his mother to combine the weight and pathos of their pleas for his life, the son of Alcestis sings alone. Although the child addresses his father several times, Admetus speaks only when the boy calls upon his mother (404–405); the father, in commonplace trimeters, explains that she cannot hear him. There is nothing amiss in what he says, but it is oddly prosaic. The child is aware that his mother is dead (393–396),[101] and his apostrophe is highly moving. For Admetus to interpret it so literally is discordant, as would be such a response to e.g. Hecuba's grief-stricken questions to Polydorus' body (*Hec.* 694–696). The contrast between the son's lyrics and the father's insipid trimeters is brief, but it may help to deepen the audience's sense of unease towards Admetus and the part he plays in Alcestis' death. The child's song is therefore not only pathetic, as it is in *Andromache*, but also invites the audience to re-evaluate Admetus' position.

Yet the most complex and innovative use of 'voiced' children is to be found in *Medea*. Although they are crucial both to the action and to the themes developed in the play, the children of Medea and Jason are silent throughout the considerable time they spend onstage; the display of their dead bodies in the exodos is not markedly different from the use of their living bodies in the rest of the play. However, after their final exit, their voices are suddenly heard from behind the scenes. As there are so few instances of 'voiced' children in tragedy we cannot know how rare it was for children to deliver offstage cries, and to speak instead of sing; however, they are certainly unique in being the only backstage characters in extant tragedy who hear and reply to the deliberations of the listening chorus.

The children are presented as potential victims from the very beginning of the play.[102] The servants' descriptions of Medea's passion (36–37, 89–95) and Jason's callousness (76–77, 88) emphasize the vulnerability of their chil-

[101] To argue that he has not fully grasped that his mother is dead in spite of the first part of his lament (e.g. Parker *ad* 404–405) is to attribute to Euripides a very unusual degree of 'realistic' child psychology. Apostrophe is conventional in lamentation over the dead in tragedy (e.g. *Ch.* 456–509, *Ant.* 1266–1269, *Tro.* 1167–1193) and elsewhere, cf. Alexiou (2002:133–134, 140, 142–145, 172–173, 174–176).

[102] Contrast the suddenness of the infanticide in *HF*.

dren, which is soon underscored by Medea's cries from the house (112–114). The medium of these curses must have been as shocking and foreboding to the audience as the message, for backstage cries almost inevitably occur later in a tragedy, accompanying an unseen act of violence.[103] This is one of the primary reasons why we find her curse so disturbing. The threat of death is delivered in the way that we expect to convey its fulfilment and therefore carries more weight than any threats uttered onstage; its very medium is associated with bloodshed. Although nothing is certain at the end of the prologue, the Nurse's foreboding that the children will "suffer something" (118) rings true. Yet despite this emphasis on their plight, the children themselves are not characterized as individuals in any way. Each of the Nurse's four apostrophes to them (82 ff., 89 ff., 98 ff., 117 ff.) is in fact a comment on the dangerous behaviour of their parents—Jason's betrayal and Medea's fury—which will result either in the children's exile σὺν μητρί (71) or their destruction σὺν πατρί (114). Their fate will depend entirely on the struggle between their parents.

Although the next three episodes move away from the potential infanticide, the objectification of the children continues. Medea uses the children as emotional leverage on Creon to gain the extra day that she needs for her revenge (344–347), and she considers their existence as the negation of the only possible grounds for her husband to leave her (490–491), while Jason uses them as an excuse to make powerful alliances, claiming that he has remarried for their benefit (557–565). It is also suggestive that Medea's own children are strangely absent from the Aegeus episode, though the idea of children is central to Aegeus' own predicament; she almost exclusively uses the first person singular to describe her plight[104] and mentions her children only as an inducement to persuade this king too to accept her supplication (and indeed, it is partially on account of this that he agrees (721)).

What, then, is the audience's reaction to Medea's first statement that she plans to kill her children (792)? We certainly cannot share the disbelief of the chorus;[105] nor, I argue, do we feel any but the most generalized

103 See Hamilton (1987:585), Arnott (1982:38).

104 E.g. μοι (690, 731, 734), με (692, 706, 711, 712, 736, 749), ἄτιμοι δ' ἐσμέν (696), ὄλωλα and ἐξελαύνομαι (704), τἀμά (739), τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν (750).

105 We have been too well prepared for the possibility even if this was indeed an innovation on Euripides' part. On this greatly debated question see e.g. Mastronarde (M) 49–64, Johnston (1997:62–65). Certainly their death was traditional, if not the infanticide; yet even if the deliberate murder was a Euripidean innovation, there are enough hints in the text of the first scenes to prepare us for the surprise.

pity for the nameless, colourless children. Instead, we are struck primarily by horror at Medea. The focus is entirely on the mother's decision to kill her children, not on the children themselves,[106] and the distinction is subtle but significant. Neither the chorus nor Medea mentions anything that presents the children as people rather than as prize possessions; there is virtually no suggestion of the suffering and fear of the children,[107] while the anticipated torments of the daughter of Creon, Jason, and Medea herself are all described by the chorus (e.g. 978–1001). The only mention of the children's future centres entirely on Medea's absence from it (1024 ff.); similarly, even during the discussion of their impending death, the only description of them (1071 ff.) is focused on the parent's experience. In contrast to other threatened children, who are acutely aware of their danger, Medea's children remain ingenuous and happy; Euripides forgoes one of the primary means of creating pity by keeping the children unconscious of their danger throughout the play, even while their mother weeps over them.[108] In their last moments onstage, the focus is on their mother's suffering, and the presence of the smiling children acts as a foil to intensify and contrast with her self-torment.[109] We may fear for them, but Euripides does not encourage our pity.

This view is further supported by the fact that the children are not distinguished from each other until the moment of their deaths. This cannot be simply attributed to the fact that they are anonymous and silent children, for the children in *HF*, who never speak a word and are never named, are nonetheless treated as individuals, both in life, when Megara distinguishes them in an evocative speech detailing the inheritance that Heracles intended for each (460 ff.), and in death, as each is killed in a specific and ironic fashion (971–1000). Medea's children are never treated so distinctly.

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106 It is telling that the numerous discussions of the infanticide focus almost entirely on Medea; cf. e.g. Golden (1971), Easterling (1977a), Newton (1985), Corti (1998: chapter 2), Hall (2010).

107 The only possible exception to this is the chorus' παίδων ἱκετᾶν πιτνόντων (863), as they try to convince themselves that Medea will spare the children. Even here, however, the focus (in context) is still on the mother's perspective.

108 Whether they simply do not hear her, or whether they hear and do not understand, is irrelevant (cf. Mastronarde (M) 391); whatever the explanation, they remain innocent of her distress as well as her intentions throughout.

109 On the authenticity of this famous monologue, see e.g. Mastronarde (M) appendix (388–397), Kovacs (1986), Burnett (1998:273–287).

Instead, and in sharp contrast with Heracles' infanticide, we are told almost nothing about the death of Medea's children. The off-stage scene consists of eight lines (1271–1278), during which we learn that Medea uses a sword (1278, anticipated at 1244–1245), and that the children, learning of her intentions, try to escape and call for help. This is all. The subsequent antistrophe does not try to conjure up the scene, and no horror-stricken messenger appears to describe the offstage events. In spite of Jason's command (1314–1315) and our expectations, there is no revelation of the bodies on the *ekkyklema*; our attention is directed instead up to the *mechane*, away from the place and time of the killing, and towards its consequences for the parents. The children's offstage cries are in fact the best way to indicate the fact of the murder without dwelling upon it; of all fifteen deaths in Euripidean tragedy, this is the most vague.[110]

But the cries of the children are not merely logistical. One of their most significant dramatic effects lies in the parallel between them and Medea's shocking cries in the prologue (96 ff.), within the chiastic structure of the play pointed out by Buttrey (1958). Though the audience may not be consciously aware of the careful construction of the play there is a clear link between the two sets of cries from the *skene*. The children's death-cries do not merely recall but represent the fulfilment of Medea's earlier imprecations from within the *skene*, which were in themselves incomplete; the children pick up where their mother left off, and the accompanying violence that was implicit in her original cry is made explicit. This indication of the death of the children is a pragmatic part of Euripides' play, but it is first and foremost the realization of their mother's curse.

Most remarkable is the fact that the hitherto silent children, who until this point are always oblivious to other characters and never distinguished from each other, are given at the moment of their death not one common, but two separate voices,[111] as well as the unparalleled ability to hear and react to the chorus outside. The reason for this, I believe, lies in Euripides' awareness of conventions and deliberate exploitation of the audience's expectations.[112] For a moment, he shows the children as individuals, but does so by placing them briefly outside of tragic convention. The first child, suddenly

110 This is perhaps emphasized by the fact that the cries are themselves integrated into a choral strophe; the effect is almost stylized.

111 Although it is possible that 1277–1278 are spoken by the same child, 1271–1272 clearly are not.

112 For other examples of such exploitation see Arnott (1982:40–43).

distinguished from his brother, is able to hear the chorus, but it does not benefit him; it is impossible for a tragic chorus to intervene, especially in offstage action, plead though he may (1277). Indeed, it seems that they do not hear his entreaty, and also forget their own idea of intervention.[113] The moment passes, and the children slip back into their purely symbolic role for the exodos; though both Medea and Jason show fierce attachment to the children in their final confrontation, it is a possessive emotion that focuses entirely on the suffering of the adults, not of the children.

Euripides therefore uses nameless children to direct the audience's attention to the adults around them. Their functions are primarily symbolic and they are generically rather than individually characterized; in particular, the primary effect of their speeches is produced by context rather than content. The natural subordination of anonymity is heightened by the child's literal dependence on his parents.

[113] Cf. Mastronarde (M) *ad* 1275: "This instance is remarkable for the rapidity with which the idea of intervention is dropped and for the lack of explicit motivation for dropping it."

CHAPTER TWO

INDIVIDUALS

One of the most significant features of drama, distinguishing it from other forms of both poetry and prose, is its lack of a narrative voice. In its absence, dramatists must show what they cannot tell; everything that a narrator might describe must be conveyed to the audience by the characters themselves, with the slight aid of scenery. In Greek tragedy, many of the functions of the absent narrator are performed by minor characters, both named and anonymous.[1] Setting and atmosphere are established in prologue speeches often delivered by figures who are not seen again, and who leave only a general sense of the mood and direction of the play to come. The messenger, backed by the Greek tradition of the *rhesis*, allows the tragedians to include long narratives of offstage events that are, if not completely objective, at least equivalent to descriptions by a narrator in other genres. And throughout the extant plays, anonymous figures are used to describe or demonstrate the poet's characterization of the heroes.[2]

There are several ways in which this is achieved. The simplest method is to have the anonymous character describe or comment on the actions of the absent hero, just as a narrator might.[3] This is considerably more straightforward than similar descriptions given by heroes themselves; in the rare cases where one plainly describes another, it is never detached, and often reveals more about the speaker than about the individual described, as in

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[1] I do not suggest that they function as narrators, but only that they are used by the tragedian to convey information that a novelist or epic poet would most likely deliver through a narrator.

[2] Just as there is no genre in which the characterization of a hero is conveyed wholly by the narrator, so there is no play in which it is established only by the role of the anonymous character; the actions and speeches of the hero himself are of course paramount. Nevertheless, the first introduction to the hero is often through an anonymous character, just as it is often through the narrator in other genres, and its effect on the audience's perception of that hero is crucial.

[3] Cf. Pfister's description of "explicit-figural characterisation" by "outside commentary" (1988:184–186). Of course in ancient texts, with or without narrator, the description of character is never as detailed as in modern literature; we do not expect a Dickensian portrait from Homer, but find subtler indications in e.g. the narrator's relative clauses and adjectives.

Ajax' evaluation of Odysseus, or Electra's of Clytaemestra. Anonymous characters, who largely lack significant characterization of their own, are very useful in this regard. Although they are rarely impartial, their relationships with other characters are greatly simplified, so that while their biases must be taken into consideration, their descriptions are very influential in the construction of the heroes' characters.

A more properly dramatic method is to compose an interaction between the protagonist and an anonymous character, creating an opportunity for the hero to demonstrate a particular trait. Such situations allow the playwright to focus all of the audience's attention on the characterization of the hero, as the progress of the plot is usually paused, and the second party is of negligible importance. Many such scenes have therefore either been read as comic[4] or have been suspected of being later interpolations;[5] they are not integrated into the tragic plot, and can therefore be both lighter in tone and easily detached from their context.

In certain cases, however, an anonymous figure does not merely provide opportunities for the hero to demonstrate particular aspects of his character, but actually makes it possible for the poet to challenge the audience's expectations of that hero's overall presentation. Such figures are rare, as they can only be used in specific conditions, but they can produce remarkable effects in one of two subtle ways: by their actions, or by their very identities. These may not seem extraordinary; many anonymous characters play a practical role in the movement of the plays, while the identity of a speaker will always have some effect on the implications of their speeches and actions. However, there are some cases, almost all Euripidean, in which the actions or identity of an anonymous character alter a hero's circumstances enough to allow the playwright to eliminate or alter elements in his conventional or expected portrayal. The effects produced by these characters are unmistakeable and almost universally recognized; yet their catalytic roles are generally overlooked, as is the subtle artistry by which the playwrights produce such innovative results.

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[4] E.g. the exchanges between the Watchman and Creon in *Antigone*, the Servant and Heracles in *Alcestis*, Hyllus' Servant and Iolaus in *Heracleidae*, the Doorkeeper and Menelaus in *Helen*, the Old Tutor and Creousa in *Ion*.

[5] In part or entirely, e.g. the Old Tutor and Electra in E. *Electra*, the Phrygian Slave and Orestes in *Orestes*.

1. What They Say

1.1. Prologizomenoi

Anonymous characters, particularly personal attendants, often appear in prologues in order to help establish the portrayal of the heroes as early as possible. However, there are only four plays whose opening monologues are delivered by anonymous characters: *Agamemnon*, *Eumenides*, *Medea*, and Euripides' *Electra*. The Watchman, the Pythia, the Nurse, the Tutor, and the Autourgos are therefore of particular interest, as they are responsible not only for the first portrayal of the heroes, but also for the initial creation of atmosphere as a whole, as well as the exposition of background information. As the Pythia has been discussed above and the Autourgos will be discussed below,[6] I will consider here only the openings of *Agamemnon* and *Medea*.

1.1.a. *The Watchman* (Agamemnon)

The Watchman is popular in at least three senses of the word. Like many humble characters, he is "un homme simple, un homme du peuple" (de Romilly 1990:118); his concerns are straightforward, and his imagery is homely. He may not strike every reader as "a fellow man, a fellow sufferer" (Fraenkel 1950 II: 26), or as "utterly captivating" (Vaughn 1976:335), but he is at least a very sympathetic figure. Finally, he has attracted surprising scholarly interest, given the brevity of his appearance and the relative simplicity of his role, in commentaries, in broader discussions, and in specific articles.[7] I have little to add to this wealth of observations, but there are certainly points worth reiterating.

The Watchman is often traced back to a Homeric predecessor,[8] yet Aeschylus' φύλαξ and Homer's σκοπός have little in common.[9] In particular,

[6] See pp. 26–27 above and Section II.4.1 below.

[7] E.g. Vaughn (1976) on the peculiarities of syntax and sense in his speech; de Romilly (1990) on his role as representative of the common people, the tension of his long wait, and his foreboding; Scott (1995), also on his commonness; Moreau (1999) on the sensitivity of his depiction and Schenker (1999:649–650) on his role as "a clearly defined template" for a series of shifts "from hope to dread." See also e.g. Sheppard (1922), Steffen (1978), and Moreau (1998:28–29).

[8] E.g. Fraenkel (*ad* 2), DP (*ad* 1 ff.), de Romilly (1990:117). The Spy is described at *Od.* 4.524–528: τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς εἶδε σκοπός, ὅν ῥα καθεῖσεν /Αἴγισθος δολόμητις ἄγων, ὑπὸ δ' ἔσχετο μισθὸν / χρυσοῦ δοιὰ τάλαντα · φύλασσε δ' ὅ γ' εἰς ἐνιαυτόν, /μή ἑ λάθοι παριών, μνήσαιτο δὲ θούριδος ἀλκῆς. / βῆ δ' ἴμεν ἀγγελέων πρὸς δώματα ποιμένι λαῶν.

[9] Cf. scholiast M: θεράπων Ἀγαμέμνονος ὁ προλογιζόμενος, οὐχὶ ὁ ὑπὸ Αἰγίσθου ταχθείς. The

the affiliations of the two figures are different. Aegisthus' Spy is bought for two talents, emphasizing the secrecy and treachery of his master's actions; the Watchman is loyal to his king, and casts him in a wholly positive light. Though he is posted by Clytaemestra, the scholiast rightly describes him as "Agamemnon's Servant"; this becomes clear after he has seen the beacon as he announces his news publicly, addressing not 'Clytaemestra' but "the wife of Agamemnon" (26). He follows this with the explicit expression of his own gladness (32–33), mingling his joy at his master's victory with his pleasure at his own release from duty. He even goes so far as to wish that he might grasp the hand of the returned king (34–35). The Watchman therefore creates a vivid and gratifying image that suggests a personal attachment quite different from, for example, the Herald's formal reverence at 518 ff. This portrayal of Agamemnon, coloured by the loyalty of the 'common man,' will later be called into question.[10] Nevertheless, an important function of the Watchman is to impress upon the audience an initially positive image of the absent protagonist.

It is, as has often been pointed out, at odds with the ominous tone of the rest of the prologue. In stark contrast to the details of the Watchman's own discomforts is the vagueness with which he alludes to the trouble in the house (18–19, 36–39); he establishes the general atmosphere of foreboding without providing any specific information. The emphatic suppression of any details, particularly in his closing lines, draws attention to his anxiety and increases its effect on the atmosphere.[11]

1.1.b. *The Nurse and the Tutor* (Medea)

The named characters of *Medea* are first introduced through the humble eyes of two slaves who address each other respectively as παλαιὸν οἴκων κτῆμα δεσποίνης ἐμῆς (49) and τέκνων ὀπαδὲ πρέσβυ τῶν Ἰάσονος (53). The latter is therefore immediately associated with Jason, and the former confirmed in the connection with Medea which she has already made clear

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only clear parallel is that both have been waiting for a year (*Od.* 4.526 and *Ag.* 2); it is also possible that the Watchman's vantage point on the roof (cf. Taplin and bibliography (1977:276 ff.); contrast Metzger (2005)) is reminiscent of the σκοπιή of his Homeric counterpart.

[10] E.g. by the chorus, who in spite of their firm loyalty cannot praise him unequivocally (notably 790 ff., but also implied in the pathetic details of Iphigenia's story in the parodos), by the Herald's report (see pp. 49–50 below) and most of all by the formality of Agamemnon's own speeches (see pp. 50–51 below).

[11] Cf. Schenker (1999:649–650) and de Romilly (1990:122).

in her opening speech (6–8, 17). Their own genders reinforce this, as do their sympathies, and each is both perfectly aware of the other's loyalties and cautious of explicit criticism (61, 83). While they contribute little or nothing to the advancement of the plot, their humble interactions foreshadow its development and prepare the audience's reactions to the principals before they themselves appear onstage.[12]

Just as the play as a whole focuses on Medea, who dominates the stage, the prologue is centred on the children's Nurse, whose primary function is to present to the audience the mistress who is her overriding concern. This is particularly important because Medea's first appearances and self-depictions onstage are manipulative, being designed to gain the sympathy first of the chorus and then of Creon. Euripides therefore uses the prologue to present her in a straightforward way,[13] first through the Nurse's soliloquy and then through her dialogue with the Tutor.

The Nurse has come outside to share her worries with the elements, and to her the voyage of the Argo—Jason's voyage—was the beginning of the trouble. Though she stops herself from cursing him outright (83), there is no ambiguity about the impression she gives of Jason, who is κακός to his family (84), "betraying" his children (17), and "dishonouring" (20, 33) and "wronging" (26) his wife. Her description of Medea, however, contains all the complexity of Euripides' portrayal as a whole. That she is the victim of Jason's wrongs is clear; that she is suffering terribly is clear; but her history, her unconventional reactions, and her very nature make sympathy extremely difficult. The Nurse recalls Medea's persuasion of the daughters of Pelias to kill their father (9–10); this is not an account of simple violence, but of Medea's powers of persuasion and deception. Though she does not explicitly mention the earlier and more gruesome event in Medea's history, the death of her brother, she does speak of her mistress' "betrayal" of father and homeland (32) in the same language that she applies to Jason's behaviour in Corinth.[14] These specific instances of Medea's past bloody deeds are overshadowed by the Nurse's description of her mistress' ominous reaction to Jason's present ingratitude (16–36), and her still more explicit forebodings particularly as regards the children (37 ff.).[15] Medea's past, present, and

[12] Compare Luschnig's focus on the Nurse as a "character" (2007: chapter 6, esp. 166).

[13] Contrast the handling of Clytaemestra in *Agamemnon*, where the Watchman in the prologue and the chorus in the parodos only obliquely hint at her dangerousness.

[14] Cf. Karydas (1998:97).

[15] For the authenticity of this passage see e.g. commentaries, Willink (1988). For

future are therefore laid out before us by a figure whose sympathy does not blind her to the heroine's terrible potential.

The entry of the Tutor and the children introduces several new elements. The onstage presence of the children is important in setting up the infanticide and makes the Nurse's concluding fears (89 ff.) more vivid. It is also dramatically effective; knowing that Medea is still ignorant of the full extent of her troubles increases the pity and fear caused by her backstage cries and first monologue. The revelation of Creon's decree (67 ff.) turns the prologue's focus from Medea's nature to Jason's, and to the relationship between them. Rehm (1989:98–99) suggests that the unparalleled dialogue between two slaves throws into sharper relief the conflict between the heroic and the domestic already suggested by the Nurse.[16] But most importantly, the Nurse's exchange with the Tutor gives the audience a very mild preview of what will prove to be Medea's method of interaction with and manipulation of potential benefactors.[17]

The Tutor enters as a figure of apparent authority. His vocative (κτῆμα) specifically emphasizes the Nurse's slave status (49), and he opens the conversation by questioning her unusual presence outside of the house, as opposed to his own freedom of movement. He then indicates his superior awareness of the masters' affairs (61–62), but declines to elaborate (64). To convince him to share his knowledge, the Nurse subtly applies three very powerful means of persuasion: in two lines (65–66) she combines the language of supplication, an appeal to fellowship, and a promise of secrecy. The Nurse's πρὸς γενείου (65) can be accompanied at most by a very brief gesture towards the Tutor's chin; certainly there is none of the drama of Medea grasping Creon's or Aegeus' knees. Nevertheless, the entreaty of the Tutor establishes a precedent for the more significant and explicit supplications that will follow. The Nurse also appeals to the Tutor not to hide his knowledge from his σύνδουλος (65), reminding him of their common weakness. Medea will develop this technique at much greater length, when she laments women's powerlessness to the chorus before appealing to them to keep her secret (230 ff.), and especially when she appeals

the Nurse's description of Medea, see e.g. Bongie (1977:28–29) and more generally Knox (1977:197–199).

16 Cf. Pucci (1980:33–34).

17 Contrast Luschnig (2007:162–164), who reads their interaction as a straightforward "collision of male and female stereotypes" and argues that the Tutor successfully suppresses the Nurse's claim to independence.

to Creon as a fellow parent to give her a day's grace for her children's sake (344–345). The irony of Medea's appeal is infinitely richer, just as her insincerity is much more evident, but it is the same method used by her slave in the prologue. Finally, the Nurse offers a promise of silence to reassure the Tutor. It is of course common for tragic characters to promise silence,[18] but it is unusual for it to be volunteered; it is generally given in answer to a request, such as the Tutor will make at 80–81. The Nurse's offer, however, is not simply a pragmatic explanation of her silence, but also a part of her persuasion; she is assuring the Tutor that he will not suffer for humouring her, just as Medea will assure Creon that no harm will come to him for giving her one more day (306 ff.). The prologue therefore provides an innocuous precedent to the pattern of Medea's manipulation of male powers throughout the play.

Furthermore, though the Tutor has the freedom of the agora and first knowledge of the royal decree, the Nurse soon demonstrates both her control of stage space and her own knowledge. Her warning to him (90–95) is immediately justified by Medea's first backstage cry,[19] and when she sends the children offstage the Tutor disappears with his charges without another word. This is another brief preview of a pattern developed in the course of the play: the gendered control of space offstage, onstage and backstage. The named male figures always enter and exit by the parodoi to be met by Medea before the house.[20] The only males who use the *skene* door[21] at all are the anonymous Tutor and children, and they do so each time at Medea's explicit bidding (894–895, 1019–1020, 1076). This exclusive control over entrance and exits into the house becomes more obviously important in the course of the play, culminating in two scenes: the children's inability to control the entrance at the moment of their death,[22] and Jason's failure to open the doors in the exodos.[23] The Nurse's command to the children and their Tutor in the prologue is a subtle and humble introduction to this pattern.

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18 Particularly choruses: see the list in Barrett *ad* 710–712.

19 Cf. p. 35 above.

20 See Gredley (1987) for an analysis of every entrance and exit (especially 30 ff. for the entrances of the men), and Luschnig (1992a:34–44) for a more general discussion of internal and external space and how they are made to relate. Cf. Clytaemestra's control of the house in *Agamemnon* (e.g. Taplin (2003:33 ff.)).

21 See Rehm (2002:253–255) for a discussion of this door and related imagery in the play.

22 See pp. 37–38 above. The children, unlike most other backstage victims, do try to escape; however, they cannot control the *skene* door or effectively command the entry of any aid.

23 See e.g. Arnott (1973:59–60), Luschnig (1992a:37–38, 44).

The primary function of the Tutor in the prologue is therefore representative. As discussed above[24] his role as a *trophos* is largely played down; he acts as a male foil to the Nurse, foreshadowing the unsympathetic Jason, the wavering Creon, and the foolish Aegeus. His later appearance at 1002 is comparable.[25] Though he brings a message to his mistress, he is not given an extended messenger speech; instead, he notices and questions her unexpected reaction to his news (1005–1012), is misled by her veiled words and his own assumptions (1013–1015), and offers ironically obtuse comfort (1015–1018). This brief exchange is in part a point of low tension before Medea's great monologue; it is also, however, the last scene in which Medea misleads and is underestimated by a male interlocutor, and the reappearance of the Tutor from the prologue may provide some closure to this pattern of interactions.

1.2. *Eteocles and His Scout* (Septem)

The ἄγγελος κατάσκοπος,[26] as he is identified in the list of characters appended to Aeschylus' *Septem*, is remembered (if he is remembered at all) for his crucial role in the central scene of the play. However, he also plays an important role in the prologue not only in terms of plot,[27] but also in the early presentation of Eteocles.

The effect of the Scout's appearance can best be seen by contrasting the king's first speech with his second. The opening speech, addressed to a silent crowd of fighting men, is a stirring call to battle, and an exhortation to bravery. The gravity of the threat to Thebes is indicated by his call for boys and old men as well as citizens in their prime to take up arms (10–13) and in the report of the seer's warning (28); however, the tone and content of the rest of the speech are entirely encouraging. Before the audience of

[24] Pp. 17–18 above.

[25] He reappears also at 894–975 accompanying the children; this is more obviously a tutor's function, but as he does not speak it is difficult to make much of this scene.

[26] Roisman (1990:19) points out the distinction between σκοπούς [...] καὶ κατοπτῆρας (36) and the fact that the Scout is a κατόπτης (42, 369) (although Russell (1999) does not make this distinction). Otherwise, however, she greatly overstates the Scout's dramatic status as she overstates his "personality" and "motives". Cf. LP *ad* 39–68: "c'est à peine si on peut le considérer comme un personnage, quoi qu'il figure sur la liste des δράματος πρόσωπα, car il n'a aucun caractère propre et sa presence ne se justifie que par les nouvelles dont il est porteur."

[27] In fact, his role in the plot is not strictly necessary as Eteocles has already been warned by the seer of the attack planned (24–29).

Theban citizens Eteocles focuses not on the consequences of failure but on the incentives for success: on the will of the gods and the loyalty due to the land. His exhortation is urgent but balanced by careful reassurance (34–35), so that Aeschylus initially presents Eteocles as a strong, competent leader.[28]

His private prayer at 69–77 is strikingly different in tone.[29] He prays now not to gain victory, but to avoid defeat, detailing the terrible consequences of losing that he omitted from his opening speech. It is crucial that this is the only moment when we see the king alone; it is not only visually striking, especially as it is placed between two crowd scenes, but it also allows the character to speak freely without making allowances for an internal audience.[30] The external audience is therefore made privy to the personal doubts that underlie Eteocles' public confidence.

The catalyst of this insight is the Scout's report, whose timely arrival marks the end of Eteocles' first public performance.[31] It coincides with the exit of the citizens,[32] and the carefully established sense of optimism goes with them. The seriousness of the situation is first suggested in the grim report of the oath of the Argive champions (42–53) and then explicitly laid out in the urgent description of the imminent threat to Thebes (54–68). The Scout's brief imperatives (τάγευσαι τάχος (58), φάρξαι πόλισμα (63), καιρὸν [...] λαβέ (65)) add to the urgency of his narrative. Placed between the king's two speeches, the report of the enemy's approach provides clear external justification for the contrast. Aeschylus is therefore able to juxtapose Eteocles' public and personal reactions in an entirely plausible scene.

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28 Cf. e.g. Moreau (2008), Giordano-Zecharya (2006:57–59), Conacher (1996:53), Podlecki (1964:284).

29 The importance of the prayer, with its explicit mention of Oedipus' curse, is agreed upon; however its specific interpretation, like the overall interpretation of Eteocles' religious attitude, is not. For the "consistent inconsistency" of his views see Podlecki (1964:286 ff.). Jackson (1988:289–294), however, makes a good case for Eteocles as the mean between religious dependence (represented by the chorus) and irreligious blasphemy (represented by the Argives). Giordano-Zecharya (2006:59–65) focuses on the contrast between Eteocles' prayer and the chorus' supplication.

30 Cf. Hutchinson *ad* 1–77 for other examples.

31 Cf. Taplin (1977:136–137), who suggests that the timing implies "a certain rightness and appropriateness in the way that events are falling out. [...] Here we feel that affairs are firmly in Eteocles' control."

32 Contrast e.g. the emphatically public reception of Creon in the prologue of *OT* (91–94).

1.3. *Agamemnon and the Herald* (Agamemnon)

The entry of the Herald is well prepared,[33] and we wait expectantly for his news. It is remarkable, however, how long it takes him to deliver it; though he begins his speech at 503, he does not mention that Agamemnon has survived until 521, and the confirmation that Troy has fallen is delayed until 525.[34] This in itself is enough to mark out the Herald as more than a simple messenger, and this impression grows during his unusual exchange with the chorus (538 ff.), his unsolicited description of the discomforts of the campaign (551 ff.) and his reluctant response to the chorus' enquiries about Menelaus (620 ff.). This is not simply a device to build suspense by delaying Agamemnon's arrival further, though this is certainly one of its effects; the most important reason for the Herald's extensive part is that it provides a valuable foil to Agamemnon's brief appearance.[35]

A convincing reading of the Herald scene can be derived from Reinhardt's recognition that "der Herold nicht nur offizieller Herold ist, sondern zugleich Soldat und Heimkehrer" (1949:81).[36] This can be expanded and usefully applied to all three speeches; each of these reveals a tension between the pessimistic, realistic, specific observations of the individual soldier ("das Menschliche") and the optimistic, idealized, vague statements of the official herald ("das Offizielle") which anticipate the style of Agamemnon's own speeches.[37] The contrast between these two aspects does not create any particular 'inconsistency of character,' but is rather a very convincing demonstration of the conflict between personal reactions and official responsibility, and fits into the pattern of optimism-dread-evasion that Schenker traces throughout the play (1999).[38] This duality in

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[33] On the identity of the speaker of 489 ff. see e.g. Taplin (1977:294 ff.), commentaries ad loc.

[34] The impact of this delay need not be lessened by the general association of the olive-wreath (494) with good news (e.g. DP *ad* 493 f.); the tone of 498 ff. is enough to instill doubts in the listeners.

[35] This is the conclusion reached by Fraenkel: "the whole character is meant [...] to set off the much greater figure of the king" (294), and he reads the Herald as a device "above all to relieve the speeches of the king of all those elements which, though important and exciting in themselves, are less material to his own character and fate" (293). However, Fraenkel limits these elements to the "common experience" of war; more importantly, he does not account for either the content or the context of the Herald's third speech.

[36] Cf. Leahy (1974:7–8).

[37] See Scodel (2008:115–116 and 119–121) for a reading of the 'official' elements of the speech as contributions to "social memory."

[38] However, in this case the three elements are much more closely linked as the pattern is varied within each of the three speeches. Schenker mentions the Herald only briefly in a footnote (1999:652).

turn contrasts sharply with the persona of the returning king, who never slips out of his public character.

The Herald's first speech sets out the clear distinction between his two aspects. The first half of the speech distinguishes him as a 'personality' capable of intense emotion that is independent of his official function. Fraenkel (ad loc.) points out the unusual use of the emotive ἰώ in trimeter, while his prayers are spoken in the first person and accordingly focused through his own perception and experience (e.g. 504–507, 510, 514). When he turns from the land to the palace at 518, the tone changes; the second half of his speech consists of the message that he has been sent to deliver announcing Agamemnon's overthrow of Troy and and the punishment of Paris. This report is both formal and impersonal:[39] elaborate praise of the king, the proclamation of his success, and a confident claim to justice in the legal imagery that concludes the speech.

Yet for all the Herald's personal joy and the confidence of his official report, there is a dark undercurrent to both parts of the speech.[40] Even in the elation of his opening few lines, he does not forget his many destroyed hopes (505), and looks forward to his burial in Greek soil (506–507). He is also conscious of his dead comrades, referring deprecatingly to the return of the στρατὸν [...] τὸν λελειμμένον δορός (517). If 527 is genuine[41] the audience cannot fail to recognize the sinister implications of the desecration of the altars, even if the Herald does not. The gods to whom he prays are equally suggestive; he only briefly mentions the sun and Zeus, but elaborates on Apollo and his original enmity towards the Greeks,[42] recalling the plague that he sent at Troy. The heroes invoked at 516 are themselves the dead, and some might perhaps recall that Hermes, in addition to being the patron of heralds (514), is also ψυχοπομπός.

In the dialogue that follows the Herald sets himself still further apart from the conventional messenger, whose usual role is to provide information and answer questions, by asking his own at 543, 545, 547, and 549. When the chorus replies with only vague misgivings about the state of Argos, he unexpectedly delivers a second speech, which is as unusual as his questions

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[39] Cf. Leahy (1974:7).

[40] Cf. e.g. Conacher (1986:25).

[41] The similarity to *Pers.* 811 prompted Salzmann's proposed deletion of this line, accepted by e.g. West (A); however, the desecration of the altars does pick up Clytaemestra's forebodings at 338 ff. as well as the story of Iphigenia.

[42] Cf. Roberts (1984:60–72). Apollo's Iliadic role as an enemy of the Greeks is in this context more relevant than his future protection of Orestes.

in that it is unsolicited, being neither a message bearing on the plot nor a response to even an implied enquiry. He begins with an optimistic statement that everything will work out in the end and that some suffering is inevitable in human life, but this subject leads him to describe the hardships of war in most unheroic terms.[43] Though he interrupts himself at 567, the length at which he dwells on these unconventional details and the persistence of his pessimism even as he attempts to retract it (e.g. 568–571, 574) undermine his optimistic conclusion.

More suggestive still is the very conclusive-sounding πάντ' ἔχεις λόγον (582),[44] for the Herald apparently intends to leave without mentioning the disaster of the fleet or the reduction of the survivors to a single ship. His departure is delayed first by Clytaemestra's appearance[45] and then by the Chorus' enquiries about Menelaus. After considerable equivocation he reluctantly delivers his final speech,[46] the tone and content of which are equally and consistently despondent. At the end of the report (674–679) the Herald does make a final attempt to salvage some hope; however, this serves only to emphasize the severity of the disaster. γένοιτο δ' ὡς ἄριστα (674) rings hollow after the horrific description of the storm; the details of personal suffering once again overwhelm the vague proclamation of official victory. When the Herald exits with assurances that what he has spoken is the truth (680), he leaves behind him an atmosphere of dread that is not alleviated but actually aggravated by his attempts at optimism.

The alternation between the Herald's official persona and his naturalistic human reactions only emphasizes the unnatural formality of Agamemnon's long-anticipated opening speech. Comparison of their opening prayers demonstrates the extent to which, as Conacher puts it (1987:30), "Agamemnon['s] presentation on stage is almost devoid of personal characterization." His address to Argos is so brief as to be negligible, and the only first person verbs throughout his speech are aorists describing events at Troy. His description of the sack also includes bold and prominent impersonals (e.g. δίκη προσειπεῖν, 811; χρὴ […] τίνειν, 821–822), and uses the same

[43] Cf. Montiglio (2000:210–212) and Leahy (1974:7–8).

[44] However, this phrase is not conventional either for departures in general or for anonymous messengers in particular: Blaydes *ad* 582 assembles examples of similar expressions, almost all of which are spoken by named characters who do not then exit—the significant exception being at *Phil.* 620, just before the false merchant leaves.

[45] Or at least the breaking of her silence; see e.g. Taplin (1977:280, 294 ff.), DP *ad* 489 ff. on Clytaemestra's "notoriously problematical" movements.

[46] Cf. Leahy (1974:8).

kind of legal terminology (813–823) with which the Herald concludes his official announcement (534–537).[47]

Significantly, the content of Agamemnon's account is limited to a variation on the second, 'official' half of the Watchman's first speech. Though Clytaemestra anticipates hearing "the whole story" from Agamemnon (599), she does not; he speaks only of the victory and never of its cost, and the audience must reconcile this omission with the Herald's full and stirring account of the Greek hardships and losses both at Troy and during the return journey. Agamemnon speaks of αἱματηρὸν τεῦχος (815) and αἵματος τυραννικοῦ (828) only with reference to Troy and Priam—an irony the audience can hardly fail to detect—and the only suggestion of Greek loss is indirect, in his admission of uncertainty as to whether or not Odysseus is alive (843). His omission of the many disasters of the Trojan expedition which the Herald has made painfully vivid to us also increases the irony of his confident response to the chorus' hinted warnings in the second half of his speech.

The figure of the Herald therefore emphasizes the unilateral optimistic formality of Agamemnon's first speech and intensifies the atmosphere of foreboding, as the Herald's "Menschliches" grates against and reveals the inadequacy of both his own and his king's official pronouncement of victory.

1.4. *Admetus and the Servants* (Alcestis)

Critical work on *Alcestis* has been very interested in the figure of Admetus,[48] and most of these discussions focus on the scenes in which Admetus himself appears. It is crucial, however, that it is the weeping Maidservant who gives the first significant descriptions of her master and mistress.[49] She is the first speaker to treat Alcestis and Admetus as separate individuals rather than as a unit, and she fills in the outlines with her personal perspective. Although her attitudes, like those of the Watchman in *Agamemnon*, are not necessarily meant to be adopted by the audience, coloured as they

[47] The shared idiom is one way in which the Herald's formal report corresponds exactly to Agamemnon's, as a good press release should. Contrast Fraenkel, who finds a difference in their juridical language that emphasizes "the profound contrast in temper and manners, in education and discretion" (294).

[48] E.g. Smith (1960), Burnett (1965), Bradley (1980), Lloyd (1985), Dyson (1988), Luschnig (1992b), Sicking (1998), Padilla (2000).

[49] The gods of the prologue and the chorus in the parodos speak only in general or impersonal terms. Though Apollo does describe Admetus as ὅσιος (10) and φίλος (42), his attachment is as much to the house as to the man (e.g. 1, 9, 23). Cf. Artemis' detached regret at *Hipp.* 1389 ff., comparing especially *Alc.* 22–23 and *Hipp.* 1437–1438, 1441.

are by her devotion to her mistress, they nonetheless suggest a particular reponse early in the play.

Her first enigmatic line—καὶ ζῶσαν εἰπεῖν καὶ θανοῦσαν ἔστι σοι (141)—foreshadows Admetus' deception of Heracles;[50] however, the Maidservant, as an anonymous minor character, does not engage in the philosophical questions of mortality and the fear or acceptance of death which will occupy her master and his guest. Her devotion to her mistress is her primary characteristic, and her brief contribution to what Conacher calls the "life/death" ambiguity[51] centres on the reality of this one particular death. She rejects the chorus' attempt to put Admetus and Alcestis on equal footing (144–145) and skims over the public fact of her mistress' self-sacrifice (154–156) to elaborate on the private details of her preparations for death (157–198). The primary effect of this speech is to show Alcestis as a model woman within a domestic backstage context: pious, concerned for and tender with her children, gracious to the servants, and devoted in her marriage.

Admetus himself, however, is strangely absent from this reported scene. The loose ring composition of the speech centres on her interaction with the marriage-bed, the sight of which breaks down Alcestis' self-control; but the husband does not appear in person during this account.[52] It is only at the chorus' explicit request that the Maidservant briefly describes Admetus' reaction, focusing on his grief over Alcestis' imminent death[53] rather than

[50] Cf. 525, 527, and especially 520–521.

[51] Conacher 37: "Neither life nor death is ever mentioned in this play without some suggestion of its opposite."

[52] Cf. Luschnig (1995:31) and Conacher *ad* 199–200: "It is significant, however, that he is kept out of the Serving-maid's long speech on Alcestis' 'last day' in her home, just as he is deprived of any effective participation in the first (and most moving) part of the Death Scene to come." Various explanations have been offered for this: e.g. that the marriage-bed and the husband are interchangeable (e.g. Dale (A) ad loc., Burnett (1965:245) and Dyson (1988:14)), though in Alcestis' two references to Admetus during this reported speech, she clearly distinguishes between the bed, both as an object and as a symbol, and the man (178, 180–181); that the Maidservant is so devoted to Alcestis that she does not think of Admetus (e.g. Luschnig (1992a:29), though she does give an unsympathetic account of his troubles at (196–198)); that "Euripides likes to 'concentrate', whether it be on one aspect of a personality, or on one individual, at a time, and this part of the play belongs to Alcestis" (Conacher *ad* 199–200). The omission, whatever its cause, is emphasized by the description of her explicitly tactile interactions with the children and even the slaves, and of their reactions.

[53] There is bitter irony in the line: μὴ προδοῦναι λίσσεται, τἀμήχανα / ζητῶν (202); cf. Smith (1960:130). Admetus will use the same verb in the same context (entreating Alcestis not to leave him) at 250 and at 275; but it is also the verb most recently used by Alcestis, as reported by the Maidservant, in her address to the marriage-bed: προδοῦναι γάρ σ' ὀκνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν / θνῄσκω (180–181).

any part taken in the preparations. This delay isolates his mourning from the rest, which is further emphasized by the lack of any indication of Alcestis' response to her husband; while there is a clear reciprocity in her reported interaction with her children and her servants, she is here described only as a χειρὸς ἄθλιον βάρος (204) to her husband.

Euripides therefore uses the Maidservant to give us the first accounts of Alcestis and Admetus as individuals and to set out the discontinuity between them. This accurately anticipates the impression made by their appearance onstage; the lack of communication is initially emphasized by her trance[54] and then by the contrast between Alcestis' emotive interaction with her children and her notably matter-of-fact and businesslike tone with Admetus.[55] There is an insurmountable distance between the giver of the sacrifice and its beneficiary, due in part to the magnitude of the χάρις conferred (e.g. 300–301),[56] but even more to the differing degrees to which each acknowledges the situation. Husband and wife are almost participating in two different death-scenes: Alcestis acutely—perhaps excessively—aware of the unique circumstances, and Admetus reacting almost as though it were a natural death. He refers only once to her sacrifice for his sake (340–341); the remainder of his speech is full of phrases that are almost gruesome in their irony,[57] as he laments the void that her death will leave in his life and his children's.

There is no question of insincerity in his grief, but there is certainly a question of appropriateness.[58] There are too few on-stage deaths to establish a generic convention, but comparison with Theseus' grief for the dying Hippolytus is instructive. His lamentation is centred on his own part in his son's death and his sense of guilt, both personal and blood-guilt (e.g. 1410, 1412, 1450); by contrast, Admetus' is focused on his loss rather than his responsibility.[59] We are now shown what the Maidservant has already

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54 See Mastronarde (1979:75).

55 Admetus does attempt to bridge this discontinuity (380), but Alcestis does not respond: cf. Stahl (1977:163–166). Gross (1974) points out suggestive parallels between Alcestis' speech to Admetus and the speeches of Andromache and Tecmessa in *Iliad* 6 and *Ajax* respectively; however, he does not consider the contrastive function of parallels, and in his focus on psychology he does not consider the question of communication.

56 See e.g. Padilla (2000:190).

57 Cf. Smith (1960:131–132), who also states that "it would be tedious to pursue the ironies through every statement."

58 Cf. pp. 33–34 above.

59 The timing of this lamentation is perhaps also troubling; "to weep for someone who was still alive, however great the probability of his death, was a bad omen" (Alexiou (2002:4–5)). Cf. also her p. 38 on modern practice: "It is still important to maintain silence at this

told us: Admetus does not yet understand his situation, his wife, or himself.

The Servant who begins the second half of the play raises different problems about Admetus. His function is partly practical; Heracles must be undeceived, and neither Admetus nor the complicit chorus (e.g. 597–605) is a suitable medium for the revelation. Euripides therefore introduces a character who is unaware of the deception,[60] and the Servant and Heracles discover the truth together. But before this, the Servant is given a long speech that raises one of the fundamental conflicts of the play and to which particular attention is drawn by the fact that it is delivered on an empty stage following the departure of the chorus.[61] The incompatibility of Admetus' obligations to Alcestis and to Heracles,[62] suggested by the chorus at 551–552 but promptly dropped in the following stasimon, is brought again to the fore; Admetus' hospitality is not limited to the ample food ordered at 548, but is a complete contravention of his unsolicited promises to Alcestis. Crucially, Admetus himself is absent from the scene. He neither observes nor experiences the consequences of his decisions; instead, the conflict of his obligations is focalized through those most impacted by his compromise—his household, whose mourning is disrupted, and his guest, who in his ignorance behaves inappropriately and earns the resentment of the servants.[63]

Yet neither the Servant nor Heracles criticizes Admetus for this decision. Heracles sees in it only a proof of his merit, which he will repay by the greatest favour (855–860). Though the Servant's reaction is more subtle, he too recognizes the deception as an action characteristic of Admetus φιλόξενος (809), and as soon as he understands it he does try (though too late) to sustain it (813). His explanation of his master's motivation (823) is uncritical, and in fact recalls Admetus' own explanation to the chorus at

time. Weeping and wailing, above all lamentation, remind the dying of the grief he is causing, and so prevent the soul from leaving the body."

60 The Servant is ignorant not only of the deception of the guest, but also of his identity (cf. the consistent use of ξένος and his reference to πανοῦργον [...] τινα (766); see also Brandt (1973:41–42)). This allows him a freedom of expression which is both comic, reminiscent of the 'complaining slave' of comedy, and serious, because of the source of his anger and the sincerity of his grief.

61 Cf. Castellani (1979:487–489).

62 This central theme has been discussed at great length: see e.g. Padilla, (2000), Goldfarb (1992), Stanton (1990), Conacher (1988:37–43), Smith (1960:143–144).

63 Cf. Brandt (1973:44), who describes the Servant as "das Opfer des übermäßigen Gastfreundschaft seines Herrn."

566–567.[64] This first clash of *philia* and *xenia* is therefore resolved relatively simply in Admetus' absence, and points to an ending that we have been both expecting and hoping for. However, it raises the questions that will be asked again in the last scene of the play, and prepares the audience for the final—onstage—testing of Admetus.

2. What Is Said to Them

2.1. *Creon and the Watchman* (Antigone)

The Watchman's role is closely tied to the significance of the two burials of Polynices. Critical readings of this problem have tended to focus on Antigone;[65] however, I suggest that the question is not "Why did Sophocles want her to go twice?"[66] but 'What does he achieve by the narrative of the first burial'? It is Creon, not Antigone, who is the focus of this first scene,[67] and it is his reaction to the Watchman's report that first demonstrates the intemperate and obdurate aspects of his characterization that have so far only been implied.[68]

This is particularly important because Creon's first speech at 162 ff. is difficult to criticize.[69] With solemnity and dignity he claims royal power and lays out the principles by which he intends to rule, and whether or not these acts are intrinsically unsettling the manner in which he performs them

64 That the Servant's primary loyalty is to Alcestis (e.g. 769–771) only increases the effect of his approval. Contrast Brandt's reading of this scene (1973:44).

65 This question has lately lost its critical popularity, but it has produced an extensive bibliography. For focus on Antigone see (in addition to commentaries) e.g. Rose (1952), Bradshaw (1962), Hulton (1963), Margon (1969 and 1972), and Held (1983) who makes interesting observations on the effect of the messenger speech on the characterization of Antigone. Scodel (1984) approaches the problem from the perspective of narrative technique. See Friis Johansen (1961:186) for older bibliography.

66 Kitto (1956:152) and Kamerbeek (*ad* 429–431); cf. Segal (1979). The play does not provide enough evidence to answer this question (hence the multitude of answers), and as Kirkwood (1958:70) points out: "Sophocles […] nowhere in the play stresses the duplication."

67 Cf. Calder (1968:397–398).

68 In e.g. Antigone's explicit and Ismene's implicit criticism in the prologue, and the Chorus' caution (211–220).

69 Most criticisms of this speech are grounded in hindsight (e.g. Hernández Muñoz (1996:153–160)) or heavily qualified (e.g. Crane (1989:112): "he is perhaps just a bit too assertive", cf. Griffith (*ad* 162–210)). Even Winnington-Ingram, one of Creon's harsher critics, (1980:123–124) admits "on the whole […] and on the surface, Creon does not come too badly out of his first appearance."'

is reasonable and self-controlled.[70] However, as he himself says, a man's nature cannot be fully known until he has been tested, ἀρχαῖς τε καὶ νόμοισιν ἐντριβής (177), and it is not until his scene with the Watchman that Creon's rulership is truly put to the test and we are shown the personal qualities that will govern his interaction with Antigone and that supersede the initial impression of rational decision and principled behaviour.

The Watchman's first speeches (223–226, 238–240, 243) are not only a description of what Creon calls his ἀθυμία (237), but also a demonstration of it. He puts up a wall of words (cf. 241) to protect himself and, though he can only delay the inevitable revelation, his reluctance communicates his terror very clearly. More importantly, he conveys the cause of his reticence: he expects that Creon will hold him responsible and punish him for the burial, as he explains both before (228, 229–230) and after (269–272, 276–277) his description of the discovery. He is not a Polonius speaking from garrulity and self-importance, but a desperate and defensive man; the initial comic undertones of his appearance are quickly eclipsed by the sincerity of his fear.[71]

As the scene progresses its tone grows darker; Creon's unsettling response fully justifies the Watchman's fears.[72] The harsh treatment of a guard who has failed in his duty may not in itself be problematic for Sophocles' audience;[73] nor is Creon's certainty of the innocent man's guilt unreasonable, given the fantastic elements in the Watchman's report, even if the audience knows (or can guess) what has happened. What is truly shocking is Creon's great anger, standing in such contrast to the cool reasonableness of his first appearance. His unfounded accusation of bribery (293–294),[74] the arbitrary tirade against money that follows, and the rancour of his threats

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[70] See e.g. Crane (1989:112–114), Podlecki (1966:363).

[71] Cf. Bradshaw (1962:210–211). Long (1968:51–53, 84–86) makes linguistic arguments for a comic reading, but there are simply too few to be convincing in the context of the scene as a whole. Seidensticker (1982:80–85) traces what he calls "eindeutig komische Züge," suggesting e.g. that we are invited to smile as at a child who denies all responsibility, when the Watchman protests his innocence at 238–240 (1982:82). However, the situation is much less funny if the child is in fact innocent and feels that there is a very good chance that he will be severely punished anyway.

[72] Violence, threatened or carried out, can certainly be comedic, especially in an Aristophanic or slapstick context, but in the absence of the usual jests and physical byplay such an interpretation is untenable, and indeed to my knowledge has not been suggested; scholars who read comedy in this scene ignore the very real threat of violence that underlies it.

[73] Cf. Crane (1989:115), Calder (1968:397 n. 41) and Bradshaw (1962:209); contrast Brown *ad* 306–309.

[74] Cf. 1033–1063, and Oedipus' suspicions of Creon at *OT* 380–389, 532–542.

are all gratuitous, and because he is unwilling to accept any possible motive for the burial apart from defiance of his own authority, the anger that he turns on the Watchman seems more personal than political.[75]

In the face of this, we might expect the humble subordinate to disappear tactfully, perhaps without even a parting speech. Instead, Sophocles has the unfortunate Watchman cautiously approach Creon again to make a last appeal (315–323). This exchange is remarkable, for though it is very brief it is essentially an agonistic confrontation, and this is the earliest of the very few extant examples of a subordinate character initiating a non-narrative stichomythia with a hero over whom he has absolutely no authority.

More particularly, this scene foreshadows Creon's clashes with Antigone, Haemon, and Teiresias, which make up a large part of the play's substance. Not only the format but also the result of these more important confrontations is indicated here; as in the later cases, Creon's inflexibility, supported by his power, overrides the logic (317, 319), the testimony (321), and the appeal (323) of his interlocutor, while his failure to respond adequately to the Watchman's arguments loses him the sympathy and support of both the internal and external audiences. It is crucial to this effect that the question under discussion is not a moral one, as is usual in the tragic *agon*, but a factual one: did the Watchman participate in the burial? This kind of question can be answered unequivocally, and the audience has no doubts; Creon is wrong, and the fact that he has the power to declare himself the victor only emphasizes this.[76] At the same time, the factuality of the question minimizes the importance of the Watchman himself; he is not presenting a personal or ethical perspective, but a simple objective truth.

This preliminary conflict is of minor importance to the play; however, the Watchman's scene sets up the pattern of the major confrontations, and his very humbleness emphasizes the defeat implicit in Creon's apparent victory over even an unimposing opponent. Sophocles here demonstrates not the king's authority but his refusal to listen to reason.[77] When Creon is faced by increasingly more influential antagonists over more problematic questions, his credibility has already been undermined as his refusal to listen to reason has been demonstrated; though he does not yield an inch before his

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[75] Contrast his attack on the chorus (280–289), which is entirely in accordance with his first speech (198–206).

[76] It is perhaps also significant that the Watchman is not, as we might expect, dismissed by Creon, but remains on stage while the king departs, and is therefore able to get in the last word.

[77] Cf. Lauriola (2007).

challengers and is able to dictate the immediate future, he does so at the expense of the audience's sympathy as well as the personal consequences that he does not foresee.

After Creon's departure, the Watchman lingers a moment longer to deliver his earnest parting speech. His exit, I think, is hardly accompanied "vom Gelächter [...] des Publikums";[78] both his resolution not to return and his gratitude for his preservation are sincere and fully justified, and both are taken up again at his reappearance.[79] His relief at his narrow escape is developed during his second entrance into joy (χαρά, 392) at having cleared himself of the charge and at the windfall (ἕρμαιον, 397) of the capture. His first words to Creon in this episode describe his own surprise at his return (388–394); he could have no more appropriate audience for this speech than the other character in the play who will eventually find himself acting as he has so forcefully refused to do.

This second report is largely practical; however, it may also reveal a much more subtle aspect of Creon's character. While in the first scene the Watchman has to be pressed into explaining what has happened, he now comes almost at once to the reason for his appearance. This time it is Creon who seems reluctant to hear what the Watchman has to say. His reaction to the news is unusually delayed; after the essential facts have been told—and indeed Antigone's very appearance must tell its own story—he asks for confirmation (403) and fuller details (401, 406). It is not until she herself, in answer to his question, accepts full responsibility for the burial (441–443) that he finally accepts the Watchman's testimonial, dismisses him, and begins the second *agon* of the play. This hesitation, particularly in contrast with his instant and erroneous accusations against both the Watchman earlier and Teiresias later, is a suggestive counterbalance to Creon's obstinacy during the *agon*; he is willing to sacrifice the ties of kinship for what he believes to be the good of the state, as he will do again with Haemon, but he is not quick to do so.

The Watchman is therefore given an important role in the exploration of Creon's character; however, it must also be noted that he is also in himself one of the most memorable anonymous figures of Greek Tragedy. The length of his non-narrative speeches distinguishes him from most other tragic messengers, including the one who later announces the deaths of

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78 Seidensticker (1982:83).

79 Even Seidensticker admits that this second entrance is not funny: "Die komischen Untertöne des ersten Auftritts fehlen hier allerdings fast ganz" (1982:83).

Haemon and Eurydice. His first narrative is relatively brief (245–267), but he arrives at 223 and does not depart until 331; his second speech is more to the point, but 388–400 are another revealing extra. But what really distinguishes him from other anonymous characters in general is the fact that the nonessential elements of his report are not the gnomic statements often pronounced by such figures; they are not comments on the situation at hand; they are not advice to his master (which is more rare but still common enough); they are not even "homely detail," "ordinary physical realities," or "ordinary ingredients of daily practical thinking" as Nussbaum (1986:53) would have it. Instead, they are unique and purely self-centred reflections, fears and protests, from his initial reluctant entry to his parting words (437–440). This is the most extensive and explicit statement of self-interest in tragedy, for even those Sophoclean figures who admit their self-interest, such as the Messenger in *Trachiniae* or the Corinthian shepherd in *OT*, wholeheartedly believe that they are acting in their masters' interests as well as their own. The Watchman, however, is entirely aware that he is leading Antigone, whom he considers a *philos*, ἐς κακόν (438); though he is sympathetic to her, Creon is his master.

It is therefore tempting to see this character as representing an inversion of Antigone's personal code of self-sacrifice, a paradigm of pragmatic self-concern,[80] and this does describe his potrayal. However, Sophocles does not invite the audience to compare the Watchman to Antigone. There is no interaction between them; although he does bring her onstage, he does not address her even in Creon's absence. Neither are their situations similar enough to be instructive; that there should be a difference between the behaviour and morals of a humble servant and a princess is hardly surprising. Therefore, while there is certainly a contrast between them, Sophocles neither emphasizes nor explores it.[81] Rather, he uses the Watchman to provoke specific reactions from Creon that reveal crucial information about his character and prepare the audience for his role in the rest of the play.

2.2. *Deianeira and the Messenger* (Trachiniae)

Lichas' lying report and its exposure by the Messenger is peripheral to the plot; the play proceeds at 490 exactly as though Lichas had entered at 180

[80] E.g. Blundell (1989:139–141).

[81] Contrast the foil provided by the practical Ismene, who begins in precisely the same circumstances as her sister.

and given a truthful account of Heracles and Iole. However, by introducing the Messenger's 'corrective' narrative role Sophocles significantly enhances the thematic exploration of truth, deception and secrecy;[82] furthermore, he emphasizes Deianeira's naiveté and passivity[83] at a crucial moment in the play.

The Messenger's initial report (180–204) is a perfectly conventional messenger speech that differs little from Lichas'.[84] His subsequent revelation and criticism of the herald's lies are entirely unexpected, and further marked out by the unusual interruption of his mistress' departure (335–341) and the insistence on privacy (342–345).[85] Yet as in *Antigone*, the most striking element of this scene is the reaction elicited by the anonymous messenger. Deianeira's first response to the devastating news of Heracles' betrayal is an *aporia* that is neither rhetorical nor transitory (375–379). She turns to the chorus for guidance (385–386),[86] and it is only at their suggestion that she decides to interrogate Lichas (387–389). It is the Messenger who criticizes Lichas' account (346–348, 358, 381–382)[87] and the chorus who expresses anger (383–384); Deianeira responds with confusion.

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82 See Halleran (1986), Garrison (1991).

83 While this characterization has long been recognized in scholarship critics have largely ignored the Messenger's role in establishing it (e.g. Ryzman (1991:389–391); the exception is McCall (1972:147–150). See e.g. Carawan (2000:191–201) and March (1987) for the discussion of how far Deianeira's passivity is a Sophoclean innovation. For the consistency of this portrayal, and particularly the significance of her suicide, see e.g. Hester (1980), Winnington-Ingram (1980:81 n. 21), March (1987:71), Loraux (1987:14, 54–56), Carawan (2000:216–220).

84 The Messenger's initial report is of course as misleading as Lichas', in spite of his later criticism of the herald's lies (410–411); however, attention is never drawn to this fact, and the unimportance of the anonymous Messenger helps to minimize it so far that it is not included in Kraus' study of stories and storytelling (1991). Contrast the Herald in *Agamemnon* who also initially conceals important information, but whose motivation in doing so is clear, and who gives clear indications of this in his own speeches; cf. Section II.1.3 above.

The only noteworthy difference between the Messenger's and Lichas' reports is in Deianeira's reaction; she responds to the Messenger's speech with her only expression of unmixed joy in the play (200–204). When Lichas enters with the captive women of Oechalia, Deianeira's pity for the new slaves (296–306) and particularly for the still unidentified Iole (307–313) qualifies her first joy at his news (293–295). This is clearest in the strong contrast between her joyous prayer to Zeus of Oeta (200–204) at the end of the Messenger's report and her invocation of Zeus τροπαῖος (303–306) at the end of Lichas'.

85 Cf. Kraus (1991:85) for the irony of this insistence.

86 It is not common for even a Sophoclean chorus to suggest such a specific and dynamic course of action; it is very rare that it should be adopted. Yet in this instance it is hardly noticeable as the natural complement to Deianeira's passivity; compare her deferral to the chorus' judgment as to the advisability of using Nessus' gift (586–587).

87 Cf. Kraus (1991:86) for an excellent link with Deianeira's own "marriage story."

The interrogation of Lichas confirms Deianeira's trusting mildness, and reveals both its power and its weakness. Though she questions the herald directly she is faced by stout denial (398–401), and her ineffectiveness as an interrogator is emphasized as the Messenger abruptly assumes this role.[88] However, his aggressive accusations meet with no better success. Though confronted by attacks on his loyalty (402–413) and the account of his earlier speech in the marketplace (417–433), Lichas refuses to change his story (434–435). He cannot be shamed or intimidated into telling the truth, but is eventually persuaded to do so by Deianeira's reassurance of her tolerance and forbearance (436–469).[89] Her patience therefore succeeds where the Messenger's aggression fails. It is, however, only a very limited form of power;[90] its efficacy depends on the trust and loyalty of others. While it convinces Lichas to abandon the lie told at least in part for her sake (479–483), it affords no protection against the harm caused by Nessus' malicious deception.[91]

Of course, the party most affected by this evidence of Deianeira's patience is not Lichas, but the audience. Her interactions with both messenger and herald, coming just before the fatal decision to use the centaur's 'love-charm,' is essential in presenting her gentleness, and ensures the audience's sympathy for her as the most pitiable victim of the ensuing catastrophe.[92]

2.3. *Orestes and the Tutor* (*Sophocles'* Electra)

The Tutor of Sophocles' *Electra* is one of tragedy's most forceful and active anonymous figures, playing an important role in the plot over several scenes. His major dramatic functions, in addition to his contributions to the action, are to demonstrate Orestes' youth[93] and to illustrate his problematic relationship with Electra. As the hero's rescuer, his tutor, and an agent of

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[88] Cf. McCall (1972:149). This effect is achieved whether we conceive of this change of roles as an impatient interruption on the Messenger's part or as a loyal intervention.

[89] For the debate as to whether or not this speech is "deceptive" see Hester (1980) and bibliography.

[90] Contra Ryzman (1991:390–391).

[91] Cf. Bowman (1999).

[92] This is not to say that she is not also responsible and accountable for it; cf. Carawan (2000:190).

[93] See general remarks on this function of *trophos* figures at pp. 13–15 above. Orestes' youth is more widely recognized in Euripides (e.g. Porter (2003), Falkner (1983)) and Aeschylus (e.g. Porter (2005), Zeitlin (1996a:99–104)), but is central to the myth as a whole (cf. Bierl (1994) and his bibliography, although his emphasis on technical *ephebic* status is not central to my argument), and not least to Sophocles' play.

Agamemnon's vengeance, he exerts remarkable influence over his former charge at crucial moments in the play, shaping both the actions and the audience's perception of the hero.

These three roles are clearly set out and linked together in his self-introduction: πρὸς σῆς ὁμαίμου καὶ κασιγνήτης λαβὼν / ἤνεγκα κἀξέσωσα κἀξεθρεψάμην / τοσόνδ' ἐς ἥβης, πατρὶ τιμωρὸν φόνου (12–14). Though Electra in her many subsequent references to the rescue[94] presents herself as its agent, it is in fact the Tutor who first establishes himself as Orestes' saviour as well as his τροφεύς.[95] This is one of the first indications of his active influence over Orestes, which is further suggested by his role as παιδαγωγός and becomes more and more clear in the course of the play. Above all, he has raised Agamemnon's son to become his avenger. Though it is somewhat melodramatic to say that he is "the spirit of vengeance incarnate" (Kells, 11), he is entirely dedicated to the vengeance and pursues it with unfailing determination that exceeds even the children's own. This singleness of purpose, rooted in his devotion to the house of Agamemnon, makes him a very impersonal figure in spite of the importance of his role.

The 'tutorial' aspects of the prologue, briefly outlined above,[96] are heavily suggestive and inseparable from the past rescue and the coming vengeance. The Tutor opens[97] the play with a reminder that they have returned from an unwilling exile before situating the action in the Argos that Orestes cannot remember. Sheppard points out that the specific sights that he chooses have special resonance:[98] Apollo λυκοκτόνου (6) may be a subtle reminder of Aegisthus the "wolf",[99] while Hera's temple might be a reminder of the sacred ties of marriage which Clytaemestra has violated. Similarly, the adjectives πολυχρύσους for Mycenae and πολύφθορον for the house of the Pelopids (9–10) have a particular significance for the landless Orestes who has come to claim his inheritance and to avenge the last bloodshed in the house with new bloodshed. The 'geography lesson' concludes with the explicit reminder of Agamemnon's murder and Orestes' rescue (11–14), at which point the Tutor turns decisively from the past to the task at hand.

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94 E.g. 295–297, 321, 601 ff., 1130–1135, 1143 ff., 1349–1356.

95 This also establishes at an early point in the play that Sophocles is using the version of the story in which the young Orestes was saved from his mother (as in Stesichorus and Euripides), and not sent away by her (as in Aeschylus).

96 Cf. pp. 15–16 above.

97 See Finglass *ad* [1] on the probable spuriousness of line 1.

98 Sheppard (1918a:82); his suggestion that Io is a parallel for Electra is much less convincing.

99 Cf. Cassandra's vision at *Ag.* 1259; she also calls upon Λύκει' Ἄπολλον (1257).

He instils in the audience a sense of urgency about the vengeance which must be planned out ἐν τάχει (16) before the household awakes for the day, culminating in the declaration: ἵν' οὐκέτ' ὀκνεῖν καιρός, ἀλλ' ἔργων ἀκμή (22).[100]

Orestes responds admirably, laying out a clear and decisive plan of action and deploying the Tutor like the trusted subordinate that he is.[101] However, after the exposition of this plan Sophocles gives us a further and unexpected illustration of the Tutor's authority.[102] From the house we hear a woman's voice. The Tutor comments upon the voice first, but he cannot identify it; Orestes, on the other hand, recognizes his sister's voice as if by instinct. He is tempted to stay, but suggests it only very tentatively, asking the Tutor's advice (80–81). The response is unequivocal. Whether the girl is indeed Electra or some servant girl does not matter; there is no question of doing anything that will delay the execution of τὰ Λοξίου (82), which will bring νίκη and κράτος τῶν δρωμένων (85). This settles the question completely, and not another word is said as the three leave the stage. Orestes' wish yields at once to the Tutor's drive.

Comparison with the prologue of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, in which Orestes is accompanied only by the silent Pylades, is suggestive; however a still more telling comparison can be made with the crucial moment in which Aeschylus' Pylades unexpectedly breaks his silence to solve his friend's dilemma (899–902).[103] In both cases, Orestes, uncertain of the best course of action, asks for advice, and is reminded of Apollo's oracle. The allusion raises a crucial point, suggesting early in the play that Orestes' point of weakness is not Clytaemestra, but Electra. Aeschylus' Orestes needs to be reminded of Apollo when he is paralysed by his mother's appeal to their most basic bond; Sophocles', on the other hand, is distracted from the business at hand by what he thinks may be his sister's voice. The Tutor 'spends' the authority of the god's command to overcome the hindrance of Orestes' love and pity not for his mother, but for his sister.[104]

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100 Smith (1990:341) points out that the significant word καιρός is used for the first and last time in this play by the Tutor "to spur Orestes to ἔργα (22) and ἔρδειν (1368)."

101 Cf. p. 16 above.

102 Sandbach (1977) argues unconvincingly for the re-assignment of the lines; see Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990:44), Finglass ad loc.

103 Cf. DeForest (1989:76), although her conclusion—that the Tutor is in fact Apollo in disguise—is absolutely untenable.

104 The timing is of course another crucial distinction; in Aeschylus, the reminder comes from a startling source as the solution to a moral dilemma at the climax of the play, while in Sophocles it comes so early that the only tension that it resolves is the question of whether the recognition will happen now or later, which is not yet an important consideration.

The Tutor's first scene therefore helps to bring out Orestes' attitude toward his sister and (by extension) his mother; his second brings out its counterparts. We are well prepared for his next appearance not only by the opening scene, but also by Clytaemestra's prayer to Λύκει' Ἄπολλον (655) which is ironically answered by his entrance.[105] The false messenger speech itself has been amply discussed elsewhere;[106] what is of particular interest to me is the difference in the responses that the 'messenger' elicits in his two hearers.

When the Tutor first announces the death (673), giving no details, Electra immediately begins to mourn. Clytaemestra, on the other hand, literally does believe her ears and instructs the 'messenger' to disregard Electra and repeat his story (675). "The technique is then repeated for maximum emphasis";[107] a second very similar cry draws a sharp reprimand from Clytaemestra, whose delight at the news is implied both in this complete lack of empathy with Electra and in her eagerness for further particulars. So much is clear; what is more complex is Clytaemestra's response to the full messenger speech (766–768). There is no question here, as there is in *Choephoroi*,[108] as to the sincerity of her reaction; indeed, she is brutally honest in her uncertainty whether to consider the death of Orestes εὐτυχῆ or δεινὰ μέν, κέρδη δέ. It is true, as Finglass (ad loc.) observes, that "self-advantage lies at the heart of each alternative"; however, the benefit of Orestes' death to Clytaemestra is a matter of fact, not of sentiment. She faces and expresses her dilemma as the mother of her enemy, and at the Tutor's prompting describes it further: δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν · οὐδὲ γὰρ κακῶς / πάσχοντι μῖσος ὧν τέκῃ προσγίγνεται (770–771).[109]

These lines are, I believe, the only reference in this play to what constitutes the core of the Aeschylean version of the myth: the conflict of duties in Orestes' need to avenge his father at the cost of killing his mother. In Sophocles, however, it is not Orestes who is torn between competing attitudes

105 Cf. p. 62 n. 99 above.

106 In addition to commentaries see e.g. MacLeod (2001:107 ff.), Barrett (2002: chapter 4), Marshall (2006) and their bibliographies.

107 Finglass *ad* 674–679.

108 Cf. p. 132 below.

109 The placement of this reaction after the Tutor's full account and not at the first news of Orestes' death is probably due to the convention of minimal preamble to a messenger speech (cf. Goward (1999:184 n. 26)), rather than an indication of insincerity or a matter of psychology (e.g. Kells *ad* 680–763). It is worth noting, however, that this might explain the obvious discrepancy between 770–771 and her treatment of Electra.

toward his mother,[110] but Clytaemestra who must decide whether to view her son as friend or foe. Her sudden expression of sincere maternal feeling (766–768 and 770–771) produces a cryptic response from the Tutor: μάτην ἄρ' ἡμεῖς, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἥκομεν (772). The psychological motivation of this line is beside the point;[111] what is crucial is that Sophocles offers Clytaemestra a chance to 'redeem' herself. She does not take it. Instead, she repeats and confirms the decision she made when she first chose Aegisthus and power over Orestes and motherhood (773–787). She herself, after expressing the importance of her bond with her son, entirely undermines it, and the Tutor and audience alike are reassured that despite her temporary qualm, Clytaemestra is no mother, and her death is not a real matricide.[112] The rightness of Orestes' course of action is confirmed, and the power of her dying plea to her son (1410–1412) will be minimized for the audience by this scene's corroboration of Electra's retort.

The Tutor stands silently through the brief but bitter quarrel between the two women before shrewdly gaining entrance into the house to reconnoitre, according to Orestes' plan (39–41). His final reappearance, however, will centre not on the report suggested in the prologue, but on a critical intervention. In the third episode, when faced first with the urn and then her living brother, Electra's thirst for vengeance is superseded for the first time.[113] From the moment of recognition (1224), the bloody past and the coming revenge that have previously occupied her mind almost exclusively are suddenly engulfed in her great joy at the return of her brother—and not as an agent of Agamemnon's revenge, but as her own *philos*.

The dialogue that follows demonstrates an important difference in their emotional temperament,[114] but this is not only a matter of characterization; it also creates a serious threat to the progress of the play. Electra is now

[110] In my view, the enormity of the matricide is minimized in Sophocles by the virtual disregard of Clytaemestra's motherhood by the avenging parties, particularly Electra (e.g. 273–274, 597–598, 789–790, 804–806, 1033, 1154, and 1194), and by the section of the agon centred on Iphigeneia (531–548, 563–594). The absence of any interaction between Orestes and Clytaemestra—played by the same actor—is also suggestive. I agree with e.g. Blundell (1989:181–183), Burnett (1998:139–140) that Clytaemnestra's death is still problematic, but not primarily as a matricide.

[111] Jebb *ad* 772 suggests that he asks them in order to provoke Clytaemestra to put aside her grief, taking them in the same spirit as 799, when the Tutor offers to leave "know[ing] very well that by the laws of hospitality he will be invited into the palace" (Kells ad loc.).

[112] Compare Kitzinger (1991:318–319), who emphasizes the complexity that this adds to Clytaemestra's character.

[113] Cf. March *ad* 1232–1287.

[114] Cf. Wright (2005b:188–191).

dangerously heedless of their very precarious position, and though Orestes has not forgotten it he is completely unable to moderate her reaction. He repeatedly advises her to keep silent (1236, 1238, 1257, 1259, 1271–1272), but she scorns his advice both in word (1239–1242, 1260–1261, 1283–1284) and in deed. His attempts to alert her to the danger of the situation grow weaker and weaker until he gives up the attempt and seeks (in vain) to persuade her at least to speak to some practical purpose (1288–1300). The progress of the plot has ground to a halt. This is the danger that was hinted at in the prologue: Orestes' love and pity for his sister prevent him from moving to the accomplishment of his goal.[115]

Only external intervention can call Electra back to their very present dangers (1322–1325). We expect the arrival of an enemy, but instead the Tutor reappears to shake Orestes from his second paralysis. His fierce outburst (1326–1338) is not simply the speech of a Tutor scolding his charges; it is overlaid with the impatience of a long-awaited revenge aggravated by further and unnecessary delay. Orestes is spurred back into action, and the Tutor delivers the promised report, giving crisp, concise answers to the two essential questions asked (1339–1342), and putting off further discussion for later. Once more, he urges his charge to finish the task at hand (1344–1345), and as in the prologue Orestes complies immediately.

The brother is now restored to the path of action, but the sister creates another delay;[116] she engages Orestes in yet another stichomythia and, discovering a second unexpected ally, expresses an even more extreme rapture (1354–1363).[117] The Tutor swiftly exerts the authority that Orestes could not (1364–1366), and he turns abruptly back to the business at hand with an impressive tricolon of asyndetic νῦν clauses. In just a few lines he clears the stage, and the audience soon hears confirmation that the first part of the revenge is complete.

When Orestes and Pylades reappear, the Tutor is not with them.[118] We are almost certainly not conscious of his disappearance; he has been the driving force of the conspiracy, but with the success of the matricide his

115 For readings of this scene focused on Electra, see Kitzinger (1991:324–325) and her bibliography.

116 Cf. Finglass *ad* 1339–1363: "[1344–1345 have] a closural effect, and we now expect Orestes to make his way, at last, into the house. In fact, almost forty lines elapse before he does so."

117 Even if this is not a literal delusion (e.g. Wright (2005b:191–192), Kells ad loc.), it is deeply unsettling.

118 There are logistical reasons for this, as the actor is now needed to play Aegisthus.

role is completed. The final events of the play have their own momentum and he is not needed to bring about their fulfilment.[119]

2.4. *Iolaus, Alcmene and the Servant of Hyllus* (Heracleidae)

Hyllus is conspicuously offstage in this play; though he is mentioned several times, he is characterized largely by his absence.[120] Even his Servant, arriving at 630, gives very little insight into the man by whom he identifies himself (Ὕλλου πενέστης, 639).[121] Unlike the Herald of Eurystheus in this play, he has been sent not as an agent but as a messenger, and until 680 this is the function that he performs. Some variety is added to his narrative role by the initial failure of both Iolaus and Alcmene to recognize him (639, 658), emphasizing the old man's grief and the old woman's fear, but until the moment when he announces his intention to return to the battlefield at 678–679 there is little to distinguish him from many a conventional loyal messenger.

However, to the surprise of the audience as well as the other characters, Iolaus interrupts his departure, and declares his own intention to accompany him (680). From this point, the Servant can no longer remain in his role as a simple messenger; in responding to this startling development, he becomes the voice of reason in the face of Iolaus' irrational determination. His first reaction is reproachful rather than respectful (682), and though he quickly phrases his objections more diplomatically in the stichomythia that follows,[122] he is no less firm in his opposition to the old man's unrealistic

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119 I hesitate to add to the controversy surrounding the ending of the play. Nevertheless, I suggest that this final scene is a further demonstration of Orestes' ephebic lack of both personal and political authority. The urgency of 1429–1438 (as Aegisthus approaches from the parodos), is reminiscent of the end of the recognition scene (as the sound of footsteps approach from inside the house). In the exodos, however, it is Orestes and not Electra who is slow to act (e.g. 1430); although Orestes reassures the women (1436), it is the chorus and Electra who take the initiative in this scene (1429–1430, 1438–1441 (cf. E. *El.* 647, pp. 76–77 below)). Similarly, Electra's exhortation that Orestes should not allow Aegisthus to speak (1483–1484) ironically recalls the hero's earlier inability to suppress his sister's excitement; and indeed, in spite of Orestes' initial effort (1491–1492) it takes him almost twenty lines of dialogue to drive Aegisthus into the house. In the absence of the Tutor, the exodos becomes a struggle for authority between all four parties, and this contributes to the unsettling nature of the ending.

120 Cf. pp. 105–106 below on the absence of Heracles.

121 Mastronarde argues (1979:96 n. 64) that "he is a soldier, not a servant," and his military participation indeed argues against his being a slave; yet his self-identification as Hyllus' πενέστης emphasizes his subordination as well as his anonymity.

122 688, 690, 684, 686, 692, 694. Zuntz's line order is now generally accepted, and is

plans. His association with Hyllus perhaps lends some force to his arguments, but, above all, each of his six objections is eminently sensible, and the old hero's refusal to listen does indeed seem foolish.

However, when Iolaus commands the Servant to fetch armour from the temple (698–699), he obeys without a word. The dialogue does not change the course of events; however, it maximizes the shock of Iolaus' unexpected decision, highlighting its irrationality not only through the Servant's verbal objections, later echoed by the chorus and Alcmene (702 ff.), but also through the unmatched spectacle of the confrontation. The visual juxtaposition of the frail old man and the strong young one, likely in military costume, illustrates and emphasizes the validity of the objections for the audience. Although Hyllus' Servant lacks any authority and is unable to impose the logic of his arguments on Iolaus' idealism, the audience is fully convinced of the old hero's imprudence.

It is difficult to assess the tone of this scene; Iolaus' determination is balanced between the pathetic and the comic.[123] But the 'arming scene' that follows the Servant's reappearance is obviously grotesque.[124] This is largely achieved by the graphic emphasis on Iolaus' infirmity, combined with the change in the Servant's demeanour from the respectful objection of the first exchange to rather personal commentary (e.g. 729, 733, 735, 739). The practical objections have already been raised and dismissed, but Euripides now demonstrates to the audience that Iolaus' resolution is not merely unrealistic but absurd, and deepens our certainty of the probable consequences. The old man's resolution to proceed in the face of ridicule in addition to physical difficulty may encourage admiration and perhaps further association with Heracles, "who knew many compromises and was constantly exposed to humiliation."[125] It is certain, however, that its long-term dramatic effect is to heighten the unexpectedness of the miracle of Iolaus' rejuvenation as his idealism is vindicated.[126]

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certainly much clearer than the transmitted text (though in any case the Servant's insistence on common sense is apparent).

[123] Compare Seidensticker (1982:93–94).

[124] Cf. Burian (1977:12), Devereux (1971:171–173).

[125] Finkelberg (1995:4). For other explanations of the comedy, see Seidensticker (1982:97–100), including his own suggestion that the comic portrayal of Iolaus is the "Wendepunkt vom affirmativen zum kritisch-ironischen Teil," and Smethurst (1950) who argues that Iolaus is presented as a ridiculous *miles gloriosus*. Allan (Hcl.) *ad* 680–747 suggests that it "encourages the audience to feel affection for Iolaus."

[126] Cf. Burian (1977:13–14). This has been variously interpreted: e.g. as a reward for piety (Falkner 1995:196 ≈ 1989:121); as a further connection to Heracles, paralleling his marriage to Hebe (Avery 1971:554–555); as a lie (Smethurst 1950:324).

This scene can also be usefully compared to the exodos, in which the Servant plays a similar role. He arrives with the captive (and so far silent) Eurystheus (928), and delivers to Alcmene a few conventional lines about victory and the vicissitudes of fortune, in much the same way that he announced to Iolaus the good news about the arrival of his master and the reinforcements. The absence of Hyllus and Iolaus is explained and emphasized (936–937), and Alcmene takes control of the stage. Her resolve to kill Eurystheus is not so very surprising; it seems to have been a common enough way of treating prisoners,[127] and has been specifically prepared in her questioning of the Messenger (879–882), who certainly implies that the prisoner's death has been delayed for Alcmene's gratification (883–884). Even the Servant's own initial explanation of his arrival (939–940) suggests that Eurystheus will be put in her power.

His[128] curt negative at 961, like Iolaus' declaration at 680, therefore comes as a shock to the audience. As before, the Servant attempts in stichomythia to dissuade an old hero from a course of action, but his sensible line of reasoning fails to convince his determined interlocutor. He is concerned not specifically with the death of Eurystheus, but with the decision of Athens; Alcmene, however, is focused not on her friends, but on her enemy.[129] It is she who conclusively ends the discussion, answering the Servant's absolute declaration (972) with her own (977) and declaring herself deaf to criticism (978–980). There is nothing more for the Servant to say; he falls silent before her, as he did before Iolaus. It is even possible that it is he who leads the bound Eurystheus to his death, as he reluctantly helped the unsteady Iolaus to the battlefield (728–729).

The effect of these parallels is to emphasize the differences between the scenes, heightening the disquieting bleakness of the exodos. The softening of Iolaus' inflexibility by his absurdity emphasizes the harshness and hardness of Alcmene's; the humorous element of his unyielding idealism has no counterpart in her unyielding wrath. Euripides invites us to compare them,

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[127] Though perhaps not so common as believed; cf. Ducrey (1999:54–55, chapter 2 *passim*). This is not to say that Alcmene's ruthless response should be taken as completely conventional, but it was probably not as shocking to Euripides' audience as it may seem to modern sensibilities. Compare Hyllus' inferred acquiescence (967–968), and the chorus' explicit approval (1021, 1053).

[128] Attempts to defend the transmitted assignment of lines (to the chorus) are unconvincing; see e.g. Mastronarde (1979:96–97) and Zuntz (1963:125–126).

[129] Cf. Falkner (1995:187–189 ≈ 1989:122–123), who emphasizes the contrast between Iolaus and Alcmene. See also the more abstract reading of Burian (1977:20–21).

using the same anonymous character to both develop and draw attention to the absolute inflexibility of the two old heroes.

2.5. *Hippolytus and the Old Man* (Hippolytus)

The Old Man introduced at the end of the prologue provides a clear challenge and a contrast to Hippolytus: old to young, slave to master, cautious to reckless, inclusive to exclusive worship. What is less clear is the intended effect of the contrast. An attractive reading is suggested by Kovacs (1987), who sets out to demonstrate that *Hippolytus*, in spite of its recent treatment by scholars, is in fact a very traditional play, with heroes like those of Homer and Sophocles (à la Knox) living according to their personal codes at the cost of their very lives. This scene fits neatly into the Sophoclean pattern that Kovacs proposes. Like Chrysothemis, Ismene, Tecmessa and others, the Old Man both demonstrates and advocates to the hero a safer way of life without realizing that this is fundamentally antithetical to his/her nature; the advice of common sense is rejected, and the hero proceeds along his chosen path.

This is a useful framework, though the scene is hardly Sophoclean in scale. Euripides reduces the intensity of the exchange by placing it in the prologue, before tension is built up around the hero's inflexibility. Furthermore, the Old Man's advice is preventative, not curative. Neither he nor the hero shares the audience's awareness of the impending danger; while Hippolytus' refusal to compromise is steadfast, it lacks the romantic appeal of the conscious choice of heroic death over unheroic life.

More importantly, the effect of the exchange is severely restricted by the humble status and limited eloquence of the adviser. The dramatic power of Sophoclean dissuasion scenes is largely grounded in the identity and persuasiveness of the would-be dissuader,[130] but the Old Man has neither advantage. As an anonymous slave he has no claim on his master; he is neither a friend nor a relative, and he lacks even the authority of a former tutor. There is no reciprocity of concern between them that might enable him to appeal to Hippolytus on personal grounds, so that his initiative in bringing up such a matter is tempered by the realistic caution of a slave volunteering a criticism of his master's behaviour. Prudence demands that he proceed very delicately, but the long analogy between men and gods (91–98) with which he introduces his concerns impedes rather than furthers his argument.

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130 See Knox (1964:11–15).

Nor is his case well presented. Euripides does not give him a *rhesis* in which to present his case, and he puts unconscious irony in the speaker's mouth to undermine the force of his arguments.[131] The best examples of this are the ambiguous use of the word σεμνός (93, 94, 99, 103)[132] and the much-debated opening line of the exchange: ἄναξ, θεοὺς γὰρ δεσπότας καλεῖν χρεών (88).[133] In both cases, the Old Man intends a gentle reminder of the subjection owed to (all) gods by men; however, the audience is likely to hear the irony that the slave does not intend, and his attempts to remind his master of the distinction between mortal and divine instead highlight their similarity for the audience.[134]

The effect of the scene, therefore, is less to demonstrate the intransigence of the hero and more to highlight the divine nature of the hero's antagonist and to present the unique difficulties created by this.[135] Aphrodite's exposition of the relationship between gods and men is clear, but the human perspective is much more complex. The danger of Hippolytus' position is manifest;[136] however, the Old Man's own conception of the divine is itself deeply inadequate.[137] He is what Mastronarde calls an "optimistic rationalist

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131 Cf. Kovacs (1980a:132–133). However, this does not necessarily imply that "the poet intends the servant, even while arguing against Hippolytus, to testify unwittingly to the correctness of his master's choice" (Kovacs 1987:37).

132 Cf. e.g. commentaries ad loc., Cairns (1997:72 n. 98); Kovacs (1987:37) ≈ (1980:132–133); Dimock (1977:246).

133 Cf. e.g. commentaries ad loc., West (1965), Glucker (1966), Levin (1971), West (1966), Diggle (1967:134), West (1980:11). The audience is likely to hear both West's "for we must address our masters as gods" and Barrett's "for we must call the gods 'masters.'" The Old Man's 'intention' might be conveyed in performance but is probably unrecoverable from the text alone; however, the parallel with the σεμνός ambiguity suggests the latter interpretation. The former can be defended in dramatic terms only as "a parenthesis in every sense, a self-contained philosophema which Euripides (not the slave) puts in for its own interest" (West 1980:11) despite the deep resonance with context, or as evidence that the Old Man is so incompetent a speaker that he undermines his argument in his opening line (Kovacs (1980a:137), who also argues that both senses are understood by the audience).

134 This is not to suggest that Hippolytus "approaches the divine" as Kovacs would have it (1987:32 ≈ 1980:133); cf. his own speech (98) and Segal (1969:297–299)).

135 In Sophocles the submission demanded of the hero is primarily to human authority. *Ajax* is perhaps the exception, but the central conflicts of the play, both before and after Ajax' death, are purely on the human level. The possibility of pacifying Athena (as distinct from the possibility of waiting out her anger) is never raised.

136 Hippolytus does not refuse to worship Aphrodite because she is "all too human" (Kovacs 1987:32–33 ≈ 1980:133), but because he is ἁγνός (102), and she is νυκτὶ θαυμαστός (106). The fact that she has been shown to be vindictive and unjust is another matter; he shuns her not because of her 'personal' character as revealed in the prologue but because of the nature of her worship.

137 Cf. Luschnig (1983:116).

who is tragically wrong" (1986:207); his perspective is not only unheroic, as he himself emphasizes (88–89, 116),[138] but mistaken, as demonstrated in his final private prayer to Aphrodite to forgive his master. His expectations of the gods, emphasized by the use of χρή (117, 120),[139] are entirely at odds with Aphrodite's opening speech.

Euripides therefore does not present in the prologue a viable model of human behaviour towards the divine, or for the reconciliation of Hippolytus and Aphrodite. Instead, he limits the Old Man's understanding of both the nature and relationship of his human and divine masters in order to enhance the audience's.

2.6. *Andromache and Her σύνδουλος* (Andromache)

The ostensible function of the Maidservant in the prologue is to bring the news of Menelaus' and Hermione's designs against Andromache's son.[140] However, she also plays an important role in establishing Andromache's status as a tragic heroine. By emphasizing the persistence of their old relationship, Euripides makes it clear that in spite of the change in her fortunes (and her own insistence to the contrary) Andromache is still a noblewoman.[141]

He begins with the Maidservant's first words, as she prefaces her news with a lengthy declaration of her unchanged loyalty to her mistress:

> δέσποιν', ἐγώ τοι τοὔνομ' οὐ φεύγω τόδε
> καλεῖν σ', ἐπείπερ καὶ κατ' οἶκον ἠξίουν
> τὸν σόν, τὸ Τροίας ἡνίκ' ᾤκοῦμεν πέδον,
> εὔνους δ' ἐκεῖ σοι ζῶντί τ' ἦ τῷ σῷ πόσει. (56–59)

Her past and present relationship to Andromache is very clear; the emphasis of their interaction, however, is not on "the true nobility of the Trojan princess" (Allan 2000:54), but rather on the Maidservant's continued devotion to her former mistress. She does not attempt to justify the title δέσποινα by any form of personal praise, but explains that she is acting in accordance

[138] Kovacs (1980a:136 n. 19) argues, contra Österud (1972:62), that we are actually meant to realize that the Old Man is speaking ὡς πρέπει δούλοις λέγειν (115), and that such a phrase would warn a Greek audience of free men about the inappropriateness of such an attitude.

[139] Contrast the parallels suggested by Mikalson (1989:96).

[140] It also adds some suspense to the episodes that follow by its presentation of Peleus; the discussion not only of the likelihood of his arrival but also of his very ability to effect a rescue (80) suggests "the bereaved and lonely old man familiar from epic" rather than "the vigorous hero of lyric" Allan (2000:22).

[141] On this portrayal more generally, see e.g. Torrance (2005:44–45), Lee (1975:10).

with the old way of thinking, which the change in Andromache's fortune has not been able to alter. Her deference and loyalty are therefore firmly rooted in the Trojan past.[142] This is not to say that she does not appreciate the realities of the present; she refers to the new masters with the same term with which she addresses Andromache (τις δεσποτῶν, 61). However, her pity for her Trojan mistress outweighs her fear of the Greek masters (61–62), as it will again at the end of this scene (82–88).

Andromache's reply is unexpected; all too aware of the reversal of her fortune, she initially rejects the deference of the Servant's address with her own: ὦ φιλτάτη σύνδουλε (σύνδουλος γὰρ εἶ / τῇ πρόσθ' ἀνάσσῃ τῇδε, νῦν δὲ δυστυχεῖ) (64–65). However, the effect of her vocative is contradicted by her explanation of it as she emphasizes the contrast between her current state and her former prosperity. Her insistence upon their similarity only highlights the disparity first indicated by the Servant.

The depth of this disparity is borne out in the exchange that follows. Their dialogue begins perfectly conventionally; there is nothing remarkable either in the Servant's information or the heroine's laments. However, when the conversation turns to Peleus, Andromache demonstrates the persistence of her power as she presses the Servant to overcome her fears and make another attempt to reach the old king. She does not need to do much persuading, as a single compliment (85) and one reproach (87) convince her loyal supporter; however, the reiteration of the risk that the Servant runs in helping Andromache (84, 86) heightens our awareness of her obedient loyalty. Her parting lines are particularly telling: she will go, ἐπεί τοι κοὐ περίβλεπτος βίος / δούλης γυναικός, ἤν τι καὶ πάθω κακόν (89–90). The fact that Andromache also lives a "slave woman's life" does not occur to either character, and neither pretends that the Servant's life is more valuable than that of her so-called σύνδουλος. Despite her slave status Andromache acts like a hero, focusing on herself and on her child, dispatching the only follower at her disposal on a dangerous mission without hesitation.

This scene therefore clearly distinguishes the born anonymous slave from the enslaved noble. Although it is clear that the Servant's devotion is an exception in the household (e.g. 82), the interaction between them establishes the audience's perception of Andromache as a character of full heroic and dramatic stature. Indeed, it may even go some way towards

142 Kyriakou (1997:8–10) points out that Andromache's past in this play is strictly limited to Troy and Hector.

explaining Hermione's hatred.[143] In the opening speech of *agon* that follows, she accuses her rival, amongst other things, of having "rich thoughts" (164), and of not knowing her place in the world (168). However repellent we may find the rest of Hermione's speech, there is some substance to these charges; Andromache the 'slave' is shown in the prologue to be every inch a tragic heroine, and remains so throughout the play.

2.7. *Electra, Orestes, and the Old Tutor* (*Euripides'* Electra)

The Old Tutor is an excellent example of the colourless anonymous character.[144] Although his entrance is carefully prepared (16–18, 286–288, and 409–416), he has no distinguishing or consistent attributes; even the infirmity that is played up at his entrance (489–492) is quickly forgotten. As a nondescript and self-effacing figure, however, he is an excellent instrument for conveying the distinctive characterization of the heroes in Euripides' interpretation of the myth.[145]

His initial exchange with Electra is affectionate; however, the token scene introduces an unexpectedly jarring note. This passage is so extraneous to the progress of the plot, and so clearly an allusion to Aeschylus, that there has been considerable debate over its authenticity.[146] However, as Gallagher (2003) argues, the passage has a distinct dramatic aim: it "prepares us for the debate between Electra and Orestes [...] (967–987)"; "in each [scene], a man who ineffectually argues for the truth submits to a rhetorically skilful woman, who is wrong" (2003:405). Both the arguments that she uses and the manner in which she delivers them are important to Euripides' characterization of Electra.

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[143] Cf. Torrance (2005:45–47), who argues that Andromache's "failure to act according to her position of subjugation" is problematic for the audience as well as for Hermione.

[144] Cf. Luschnig (1995:109 n. 64).

[145] This has been the subject of considerable scholarly discussion. Although no one denies Euripides' innovation, some scholars reject that the portrayal of Electra and Orestes is negative (e.g. Lloyd (1986), Michelini (1986: chapter 7), Zeitlin (1970), Cropp's edition, and more recently Papadimitropoulos (2008)); however, in such discussions the scenes with the Tutor—and with the Autourgos—are either omitted or explained by special pleading. It will become clear that I belong to the unsympathetic majority as regards both Electra and Orestes (cf. e.g. Luschnig (1995), Raeburn (2000), scholars cited by Lloyd (1986:2) and Porter (1990:255 n. 1)).

[146] For bibliography see e.g. Gallagher (2003:401 n. 1), Davies (1998), Kovacs (1989) and Bond (1974). I agree with the majority view that there is no objectively persuasive reason for deletion: the passage is coherent with the rest of the play, and there is no reason to exclude the possibility of parody in tragedy.

The Tutor has been to Agamemnon's tomb, and seen what he believes may be evidence of Orestes' presence; he identifies three possible means of recognition, each of which Electra rejects. The Athenian audience, as Gallagher points out, would in all likelihood have recognized in her deft semantic manipulation the techniques of the fifth-century Sophists.[147] But both the strengths and the weaknesses of her arguments are secondary to the vehemence with which they are delivered, as she presents two rebuttals for every proposed token. She rejects with scorn the possible similarity of the hair and the very existence of the footprint and the hypothetical cloth (526–529, 534–535, 541–544); however, she does not stop at this. In each case, she goes on to argue that even if they could exist, they would not be reliable or realistic tokens of Orestes' identity. She does not simply refute the Tutor's suggestions; she ridicules both his observations and his conclusions. Yet both her derision of the Old Tutor and Euripides' 'parody' of Aeschylus are coloured by the audience's knowledge that Orestes has indeed returned, and that the tokens are genuine.

The vehemence of Electra's denial builds upon her first reaction to the suggestion that Orestes might have returned secretly: οὐκ ἄξι' ἀνδρός, ὦ γέρον, σοφοῦ λέγεις, / εἰ κρυπτὸν ἐς γῆν τήνδ' ἂν Αἰγίσθου φόβῳ / δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμὸν εὐθαρσῆ μολεῖν (524–526). As has been well established,[148] she has an idealized belief in her brother as a heroic rescuer, first demonstrated in her earlier interactions with the disguised Orestes (esp. 274–275, 336–338). The measure of this is demonstrated in her fierce reaction to the tokens and their implication that he may have returned furtively, in stark contrast to her unhesitating acceptance of Orestes' 'messenger' (228–229). Euripides therefore uses the Old Tutor to play upon both the audience's and Electra's own expectations of the myth.[149]

With dramatic economy, he then uses the same anonymous character to bring out the reality with which the heroine is confronted.[150] Orestes'

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147 See Gallagher (2003:405–411) for a detailed discussion, cf. Collard (1975:63). Note that Electra's rhetorical aptitude should not be equated with rationality. It may also be true, as Gallagher argues (2003:411–412) that the Old Tutor, as an incompetent speaker, unintentionally "makes the stronger argument the weaker"; however, the uniqueness of this exchange lies not in his suggestions, which are traditional in this and other recognition scenes, but in Electra's responses.

148 E.g. Arnott (1981:182–183).

149 This is not incompatible with the solution proposed by Halporn, that the rejection of the token serves "to separate Orestes and Electra as far as possible" (1983:113). Her dismissal of the traditional proofs of kinship and affection is certainly suggestive.

150 The Old Tutor's role in Orestes' portrayal might better be described as the effect of

passiveness has already been suggested in his first incognito scene with Electra (e.g. 274–279); however, it is firmly established by his purely reactive role in the recognition scene. This is unique in extant tragedy: it is neither mutual, as in *Choephoroi*, nor the self-identification of one character who has recognized the other, as in Sophocles' *Electra*. Instead, it is a third party, the Old Tutor, who not only identifies the newcomer (558–559) but is also given the task of offering proofs[151] to the still sceptical Electra, while Orestes stands passive. This remarkable inaction heightens the irony of the few typical words that make up his part in the reunion (579–580) and undermines his conventionally confident declaration of revenge (581–584).

The disparity between the idealized hero and the real Orestes becomes still more pronounced in the plotting scene that follows. After the recognition, Orestes stops the embrace with appropriate firmness and decision to begin planning the revenge (596–597). Yet he immediately and emphatically turns to the Tutor for advice (598). This sudden reliance is all the more surprising because of the lack of any personal relationship between them; at first sight, Orestes dismissively describes the Tutor as a παλαιὸν ἀνδρὸς λείψανον (554). His dependence on the old man now demonstrates the uncertainty that has been anticipated in his earlier exchange with Electra (274–279). He asks six questions in as many lines (599–604) and has no plan to propose. A thirty-line stichomythia follows, in which the hero continues in his helpless *aporia* (612, 614, 618) until the Tutor at last offers a plan (619). As the old man gradually outlines every detail of the strategy, Orestes asks more practical questions, but he does not venture a single statement of his own until the plan is complete at 638. This is not the decisive hero of convention and of Electra's fantasy, but a young man whose confident speech evaporates in the face of practical action.[152]

Euripides and Electra emphasize this further by omitting him entirely from the planning of the matricide. When Orestes raises the problem of Clytaemestra's death with the same helpless questioning (640, 642, 646), Electra breaks her silence: ἐγὼ φόνον γε μητρὸς ἐξαρτύσομαι (647). Orestes

action rather than dialogue; however, due to the close connection of Orestes' portrayal and Electra's perception of him, I include both of the Old Tutor's functions together here.

151 The scar itself and its obvious allusion to the recognition of the reluctant Odysseus by Eurycleia are also suggestive. Orestes is scarred on the forehead, not the ankle, as a result of a fall, not an attack, in chasing not a boar but a fawn, with his sister, not the sons of Autolycus. Cf. Goff (1991), Halporn (1983:107–108) and Tarkow (1981:144–148).

152 Compare Mastronarde (2010:287–288), who draws attention to the contrast between Orestes' passivity on stage and his offstage efficiency as later reported by the messenger.

immediately agrees, and it is she who comes up with the second deception and delegates the tasks that need to be done, while her brother lapses into silence. It is now the Old Tutor who asks her for the details of his responsibilities (650–667),[153] and as the anonymous old man slips into his natural function as a faithful servant taking orders the audience is encouraged to notice the resemblance between this subordinate role and the one just played by Orestes.

Euripides concludes the scene with a final demonstration of the contrast between Orestes' speech and action. When the second plan has been devised Electra turns back to her brother, urging him to action (668), and his reponse is astonishingly feeble: στείχοιμ' ἄν, εἴ τις ἡγεμὼν γίγνοιθ' ὁδοῦ (669). The practical helplessness indicated here is heightened by the contrast with Electra's drive and the Tutor's willingness to assist (already expressed at 664–665). In the prayer that follows, Orestes again assumes the leading role;[154] however, when the moment comes for action it is Electra who sends Orestes away and exhorts him: πρὸς τάδ' ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαί σε χρή (693).

Dialogue with the Old Tutor therefore plays an important role in the characterization of both heroes. However, his own portrayal is largely unremarkable. Despite the important role that he plays in the plotting, he is oblivious to its moral implications; he is excluded from the ethical sphere of the play. He is also given little opportunity to draw attention to himself an individual, so that he is no more a 'personality' than he is a 'character.'[155] Instead, the very blandness of his depiction serves as a neutral backdrop against which Euripides can develop his heroes, demonstrating the complex interactions of Electra's expectations with Orestes' incongruous speech and actions.

2.8. *Menelaus and the Doorkeeper* (Helen)

The exchange between the shipwrecked Menelaus and the Doorkeeper falls into two parts: "eine dramatische Rahmenhandlung" and "eine informative Stichomythie" (Kannicht *ad* 435–482). Together with his entrance monody (386–434), they establish the characterization of this particular incarnation

153 Kubo (1967:16) believes that the change occurs because of the "mystifying" content of 651–652; however, at 650 the Old Man is already playing the subordinate role.

154 The MS attribution of lines (and the omission of the Old Man) can only be defended by special pleading (e.g. Kovacs (1987a:263–265)), particularly as to the interpretation of τοῖσδε in 676 and 679.

155 Cf. pp. 7–8 above.

of one of the more variously presented heroes in tragedy.[156] Furthermore, the many parallels between this scene, which is "in effect a second Prologue,"[157] and the actual prologue exchange between Helen and Teucer invite the audience to compare the two main characters, and firmly establish their respective roles in the play.

The first section (435–458), coming as it does at the end of Menelaus' conventional tragic monologue, "juxtaposes his claim to Trojan glory with a verbal and physical defeat at the hands of an old Egyptian woman, and a slave at that" (Burian 217). It is now generally recognized to be essentially comic, and closely related to the stock door-knocking scene of Aristophanic and later comedy.[158] However, it is important that Menelaus himself does not play an obviously humorous role.[159] He acts with proper tragic decorum throughout; however, like the 'straight man' of a comedy double act, he only succeeds in increasing the ludicrous effect of the exchange. His call for a πυλωρός (435–436)—not merely the common παῖς of comedy—is courteously phrased and dignified.[160] There is no preparation for the unexpected rudeness and abruptness of the Doorkeeper who appears, and Menelaus, taken aback, replies meekly to "the abusive tone rather than the content" (Dale (H) *ad* 441–442). Where a comic hero might respond in kind or with outright blandishments,[161] the tragic hero has no prepared reaction. When she seems intent on forcibly repelling him,[162] his consternation (445) is tragically but not paratragically phrased; it is the context of delivery, in the mouth of the self-proclaimed popular leader of the greatest army (393–396), that makes it both pathetic and amusing. There is no extended struggle; Menelaus recovers his composure sufficiently to repeat his original request. But the Doorkeeper does not relent, interrupting his plea, and at 452 resumes the threat of force before which Menelaus again backs down.[163] He now resigns himself to tragic lamentation which wins no sympathy from the slave. Indeed, her caustic comments on his self-pity, dismissing both his epic fame in other contexts (ἐκεῖ που, 454) and his tragic tears (456, 458), point out the

[156] For polarized views on his role in this play see e.g. Dirat (1976) and Blaiklock (1952).

[157] Dale (H) xii; cf. Kannicht *ad* 386–514.

[158] Cf. e.g. Allan (H) 198–199, Traill (2001:98–104), Brown (2000:2–3, 5–8), Seidensticker (1982:172–179). Ypsilanti (2006) points out suggestive Odyssean resonances in this scene.

[159] Cf. Podlecki (1970:402–404).

[160] Cf. Traill (2001:104), Kannicht *ad* 435–436.

[161] Cf. Traill (2001:100).

[162] The precise meaning (and indeed the text) of πρόσειε or προσείλει (445) is unclear, but the line certainly implies at least the threat of physical contact.

[163] τάχ' ὠσθήσῃ βίᾳ echoes the μηδ' ὤθει βίᾳ of 445.

impractical, theatrical aspect of his reaction. With her final impatient dismissal (458) an impasse is reached; Menelaus cannot leave and the Doorkeeper cannot relent.

It is at this point that the dialogue turns unexpectedly into a conventional tragic informative stichomythia. Suddenly Menelaus begins to question the Doorkeeper—now transformed into a typical helpful slave whose answers show no sign of her earlier brusqueness—with as much equanimity as if these lines had followed directly after 356.[164] The change in tone is immediate and complete, and the only possible reference to the first half of the scene is the parting *apologia* of the old slave (481–482).[165] From 459 onwards, Menelaus is treated as seriously as Helen, and there is no hint of levity as he learns the three crucial facts of his location, the hostility of Theoclymenus, and the presence of Helen in the house.

Nor is there anything comic about his reaction.[166] That he cannot believe the third fact and disregards the second is hardly surprising; a coincidence of names (497–499) is certainly the most logical solution to the puzzle of the two Helens, and his resolve to risk τὸ δεινὸν προσπόλου (500), relying on the power of his name (501–502), is just what we would expect of a hero. The exchange has not altered Menelaus' resolve; in fact, if we accept (with e.g. Diggle and Kovacs) Willink's deletion of 503–509, the encounter has had no effect on him at all. The entry of the chorus and of Helen forestalls his approach to the palace; however, Euripides makes sure to establish Menelaus' intentions in the speech following the Doorkeeper's departure, and ensures that his heroic status has not been badly undermined by the comic episode.

The purpose of the brief comic interlude becomes clearer through comparison with the prologue. Helen and Menelaus begin their respective scenes with a long introductory speech, giving essential information and lamenting their respective misfortunes. The unusual disappearance of the

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164 It is worth noting that the Doorkeeper's loyalties are clearly to Proteus rather than to Theoclymenus; apart from her explicit statement of her sympathy for Menelaus, she still regards the palace as Proteus' (459–460, 466), and considers that his death has disordered the household (477–478). Cf. also her final words (481–482) stressing her fear of Theoclymenus, if genuine (see next note).

165 Even this is contested: Kovacs proposes the deletion of the couplet based on the difficulty of οὐχ ὅσον (481, which most editors have at least felt the need to explain) and the superfluousness of such detail about "the attitude of this anonymous old woman" (2003:35). I am tempted to agree; the explicit δεσπότην φοβουμένη (482) is unnecessary after the warning about the δεσπότης (479). Contrast Kannicht *ad* 435–482.

166 Contra Segal (1995:51).

chorus after the parodos,[167] so that Menelaus speaks to an empty stage, emphasizes the parallel, as does the visual effect of the shipwrecked man seeking the help of a local woman. Furthermore, Helen's dialogue with Teucer has many points in common with Menelaus' interview with the Doorkeeper. In both cases it is the woman who controls the exchange. Although Helen does not aggressively dominate Teucer as the Doorkeeper does Menelaus, there is no doubt that it is she who directs the dialogue. She ignores his opening question (68) and instead interrogates him about Troy and the Greeks; it is not until 143 that he turns the conversation from her concerns to his. In contrast to the details that he has given, she speaks only vaguely of the danger that awaits him; in fact, she does not give him any of the three pieces of information that the Doorkeeper eventually gives to Menelaus.[168] Helen also retains control over Teucer's perception of her as a mere look-alike of herself (74). She remains anonymous to him because she chooses to do so, and carefully reinforces this (e.g. 79, 109, 115, 125); Menelaus, however, remains unrecognized against his will because of the Doorkeeper's indifference (453–458).[169] Finally, it is Helen who ends the exchange, dismissing Teucer as the Doorkeeper dismisses Menelaus.

The purpose of the second episode, then, is not simply to diminish Menelaus' tragic stature, but specifically to subordinate him dramatically to Helen; she is the protagonist of the play, and it is she who will rescue them both. Euripides uses the exchange with the Doorkeeper to communicate this clearly to the audience without sacrificing Menelaus' heroic stature. His failure to deal with the obstacle is not attributed to intrinsic weakness or a lack of tragic heroism;[170] as Dale (H) xi puts it, "he is no 'parody of a hero', but merely a hero in a predicament where no amount of courage or resource could possibly have availed him." This predicament, however, is not the shipwreck, but the introduction of an antagonist from the comic genre. The tragic hero is not equipped to deal with a comic antagonist, who shows

167 Cf. Kannicht II.121.

168 Two of them she deliberately withholds (156–157).

169 It is true, however, that he does not name himself to the Doorkeeper, either from caution or perhaps from αἰδώς (415–417, cf. also Odysseus' anonymous arrival among the Phaeacians, *Od.* 6). Kannicht comments *ad* 435–482 that she does not ask his name both because of the necessity of preserving Menelaus' anonymity in the deception of Theoclymenus (cf. 818), and because it is an "adequäte Ausdruck des Desinteresses an der Person des Menelaus." Brandt (1973:41–42) implies less convincingly that his anonymity, together with his appearance, allows for the Doorkeeper's lack of respect.

170 For this view of Menelaus see bibliography in Torrance (2009:1, n. 5). Torrance's own reading omits this scene entirely.

neither respect nor fear and can be neither commanded nor persuaded to give way. The encounter therefore may provoke laughter, but not scorn, and the continuity of the anonymous Doorkeeper's portrayal is then sacrificed to return us to the world of tragedy. The way is therefore cleared for Helen to take the lead in the rest of the play without undermining her husband's status.

2.9. *Orestes and the Phrygian Slave* (Orestes)[171]

The scholarly reaction against Krieg's 1934 defence of a heroic Orestes[172] has lately been the target of further reaction. It is no longer fashionable to criticize the character of Orestes in this play, and scholars have tried to re-emphasize the extreme situation in which the heroes find themselves while glossing over their characterization.[173] The pendulum, however, has swung too far. Characterization may in some cases be subordinated to other considerations, and it is certainly fruitless to try and discern the 'psychology' of fictional characters, but to focus on their circumstances at the expense even of their actions is absurd.[174] The pity aroused especially in the prologue for

[171] I am not wholly convinced that this passage (1503–1536) is genuine, not because the passage is 'inconsistent' or 'unEuripidean,' but because of the confusion over the fate of Helen raised by 1512–1513, 1534 and 1536. Willink's solution (*ad* 1506–1536, *ad* 1512), that Euripides is maintaining the *suggestio falsi* of the death, makes little sense; this would best have been achieved by the simple omission of the Phrygian's climactic revelation of her disappearance (1494–1498). Porter's argument that the inconsistency is illogical but dramatically effective (1994:236–241) is less convincing still. O'Brien's interpretation (1986:221–223), that Orestes is deluded by a god into believing that he has succeeded, is clever but problematic as he admits himself, as the posited delusion is never referred to. West's casual suggestion that "it seems necessary to convict Euripides of carelessness" (O) *ad* 1512 is possible, but unsatisfying; in every other play in which Euripides introduces a startling innovation, as in the unusual circumstances of *Helen*, *Electra*, and *IT*, he is very careful to stress the changes so as not to confuse the audience. It seems more plausible to me to attribute such negligence to an interpolator seeking to increase the audience's confusion, as Seidensticker suggests that Euripides is doing (1985:451–452), in order to heighten the effect of the resolution. This play, however, is so atypical that I hesitate to make any assertions.

[172] Cf. Willink xlviii–xlix.

[173] Cf. e.g. West (O) 32–34 and *passim*, Porter (1994:xi and *passim*). Porter has more recently suggested a more character-based reading, arguing that Orestes' "exaggerated helplessness and inhibition, his constant need to be prodded into action, his habitual recourse to hysteria, the extravagant expressions of impotence in which he indulges" are typical of the *ephebe* (2003); cf. Mastronarde (2010:288–289). Neither, however, accounts for this scene, which cannot be explained in such terms. Falkner (1983) gives a more convincing reading of Orestes' youth.

[174] For example, to argue as West (O) 37 does that any other response to the circumstances would be dramatically tedious does not change the fact that the action taken is morally abhorrent.

the position in which Orestes and Electra find themselves cannot obscure, though it may colour, the response of the audience to the decisions actually made onstage by the heroes and the repellent implications of those decisions.

I therefore argue that the dialogue between the Phrygian slave and Orestes is not "both functional and hilarious" (West (O) *ad* 1503–1536), or intended to "present Orestes in a state of manic revolt" (Porter 1994:250), but is, as was commonly accepted thirty years ago, primarily designed to expose the most unsavoury aspect of the hero's character.[175] Without question, the Phrygian is a very colourful and interesting figure in his own right and hardly provides the usual plain 'background' against which the hero may be more clearly depicted. However, he has "already characterized himself fully and at length" (O'Brien 1986:220) in his messenger speech, and though his lines in the dialogue with Orestes are almost invariably comic and re-emphasize certain conspicuous features, such as his cowardice, the focus is certainly on the hero's part.[176] The suffering of the Phrygian is of little significance in itself, which his own comic effect serves to minimize. It is the state of the tormentor, not his victim, that is of interest; what is crucial is that we see Orestes, who has been entirely helpless and dependent on others, in a position of power for the first time.[177] Even allowing for modern scruples in such matters, his behaviour in this scene is repellent. Any attempt to see it as heroic (if unsympathetic) is made ironic if not absolutely absurd by the emphatically base nature of his opponent[178] and by the purposelessness of the abuse to which he subjects him.

The staging of the encounter is suggestive of this, as the slave prostrates himself (1507) as soon as Orestes arrives brandishing his sword,[179] but the transformation from coward to bully is more fully realized and emphasized

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175 Cf. do Deserto (1996).

176 For a full discussion of the Phrygian's servile characterization, stressing his unusual lack of loyalty to Helen, see Brandt (1973:132–135); for a discussion of the unusually emphasized barbarian aspects of his representation see Bacon (1961:118–119, 121–127, 147).

177 It is important that in this scene he is unaccompanied either by Electra or Pylades, who have both been shown to have the strongest influence over him as demonstrated both in their physical support and in their instigation of the plot against Helen and Hermione.

178 The status of a hero is heavily dependent on that of his enemy; Electra has taken advantage of this at 1350–1352 to belittle Menelaus' achievements at Troy. Compare in Homer the general mortification at Antinous striking the supposed beggar (*Od.* 17:462–471) as compared to the approval of the fight between Irus and the same beggar (*Od.* 18:40–41, 50). Cf. e.g. Fuqua (1978) and Euben (1986) on the general inversion of Iliadic themes.

179 If Wright (2008) is right in arguing that the Phrygian enters on the *mechane*, his abasement is even more visually striking.

by the heavy irony of Orestes' taunts. It hardly seems necessary to consider the scene in any detail, considering how much has been written on the subject;[180] yet as there are apparently some to whom Orestes' conduct here appears excusable, a quick summary follows.

Although he disparages the Phrygian's self-abasement (1507–1508), it is reminiscent of his own supplication of Menelaus (382–383).[181] The questions that he asks (1510–1522) are not designed to elicit information, but to demonstrate his power over and contempt for his victim; each one, however, emphasizes a weakness of his own. The first—οὔτι που κραυγὴν ἔθηκας, Μενέλεων βοηδρομεῖν; (1510)—is on the surface practical, yet it recalls the furtive nature of his scheme and his own apprehension. It is implausible that he is actually seeking the slave's approval of his actions when he asks whether it was just that Helen died (1512);[182] however it is ironic that he asks the very question which must most trouble the audience, while the ambiguous reference to the death of "Tyndareus' daughter" recalls his matricide. The scorn with which he then mocks the Phrygian's hypocritical cowardice (1514) recalls his own adaptability in the interviews with both Tyndareus and Menelaus as well as the report of his speech to the Assembly.[183] The threats and taunts of 1516–1520 are entirely gratuitous; even if they could be acceptable to the audience as "behaviour characteristic of an arrogant young aristocratic 'blood'" (Willink *ad* 1518), they are insufferable in the mouth of a man who has already shown himself terrified of death. The implication of 1522—that the death of a slave is not the same as that of a free man—is reminiscent of Admetus' reproach to his father in *Alcestis* (711), and the effect of the Phrygian's reply is the same as Pheres': the man who avoids his own death at all costs cannot belittle the life of another, whatever his station, without calling his own worth into question. Orestes' dismissal of the Phrygian at 1524 may indeed be sardonic, as Porter argues (1994:247); his own irony, however, does not preclude that of the author, and the resonance of the Phrygian's craven σύνεσις with Orestes' own portrayal is suggestive.

180 Cf. bibliography listed by Porter (1994:245 n. 119).

181 Cf. Falkner (1983:297).

182 Cf. e.g. Burnett (1971:219), Burkert (1974:105).

183 On his *ad hominem* rhetoric cf. Mastronarde (2010:240–245), Falkner (1983:294–296). Of particular interest are his awareness of, shame at, and resignation to his obsequiousness (671–673), and the contrast between his deferential addresses to Tyndareus and Menelaus (544–550 and 380–383) and the petulant insults that he hurls at their retreating backs (630–631 and 717–721).

Two comparable scenes from more traditional sources are instructive. As Burkert points out (1974:104–105), there are suggestive parallels between this scene and the common pictorial representation of the Greek warrior standing over a fallen barbarian foe. However, the Phrygian here is no warrior, but a prostrate, unarmed slave; the image of the triumphant Greek is therefore grotesquely distorted. The capture and killing of Dolon in Book 10 of the *Iliad*, also repeatedly depicted in vase-paintings,[184] is perhaps a closer point of comparison, for though the death in itself is no cause for concern in the context of war,[185] the behaviour of Odysseus and Diomedes is questionable and the circumstances of Dolon's death are distinctly unheroic. Dolon is armed, but not properly armoured (334–335); he is outnumbered two to one; he weeps as he pleads for his life (378–381); and he is ruthlessly decapitated (454–457) in spite of Odysseus' reassurance (383).[186]

The epic poet, however, does not dwell on these aspects of the scene. The vast majority of the exchange is taken up by the Trojan's detailed answers to the factual questions put to him, and events after the killing of Dolon move on very swiftly. By contrast, the exchange between Orestes and the Phrygian reveals little practical information; on the contrary, Euripides delays the progress of the plot during this scene, encouraging the audience to consider carefully the protagonist's words and actions. Furthermore, his hero conducts his interrogation in precisely the opposite manner to that of the Homeric. Where Odysseus works to puts his victim at ease,[187] Orestes deliberately terrifies his victim. Odysseus' tone is businesslike, avoiding personal comments even in his amusement at Dolon's ambition for Achilles' horses (402–404); Orestes says nothing without insult. Odysseus seeks and successfully obtains crucial intelligence from his victim; Orestes seeks and gains nothing but the pleasure of self-indulgence.

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184 See e.g. Lissarrague (1980).

185 There are five other Iliadic instances of captives executed in spite of their pleas and offers of ransom; cf. Ducrey (1999:56–57).

186 E.g. Hainsworth *ad* 447: "Dolon has been exceedingly helpful [...] and his captors did not need to use verbal or physical violence to make him talk. His summary execution in cold blood therefore comes as something of a shock." It is true, as he concludes, that "we need not weep over the demise of the humble and unwarlike Dolon," but we can question the behaviour of his captors. Compare the exclusion of this scene from the *Rhesus*, who mentions only the fact of Dolon's death without any description of how it occurred.

187 Even if Pache (2000:19–20) is right in describing Odysseus' smile as "disconcerting," there is no doubt that it is superficially reassuring to the ignorant Dolon, and perhaps to the audience (who may not yet know that Dolon will be killed).

It is certainly true that the heroes of this play are placed in extreme circumstances that extenuate most of the actions that they resolve upon. However, in this scene the playwright removes Orestes from the pressures of his situation; in this exchange with a wholly powerless, submissive slave, he is entirely in control and unthreatened, and the manner in which he chooses to treat him is repellent. Whatever claim he may have upon the audience's sympathy from his original portrayal as a helpless victim or from the extremity of his circumstances is dispelled in this crucial scene by his own callous victimization of the Phrygian.

3. What They Do

Critical responses to the Nurse in *Hippolytus* and the Old Tutor in *Ion* have largely been negative, mitigated to a greater or lesser extent by acknowledgement that these characters act with their mistresses' interests at heart[188] and by allowances made for the fifth-century audience's constructed view of slaves.[189] It is important to recognize, however, that their subordination is dramatic as well as social, and that their roles as well as their loyalties are dependent on their mistresses. Attempts to discuss them as fully independent characters are therefore limited.

Their primary function, as most critics recognize, is to perform a repellent action necessary to produce the tragic plot as conceived by the poet. Both plays depend on crises that must be precipitated by someone; Hippolytus must learn of Phaedra's love, and Ion's life must be threatened. What is rarely recognized, or at least rarely stated,[190] is that in both cases the expected agent, as indicated by the conventions of general heroic action and of the 'wicked stepmother' figure in particular,[191] is the heroine herself. By delegating these crucial but unsavoury acts to an anonymous servant motivated only by devoted loyalty, Euripides partially relieves the heroines

[188] For the Nurse, e.g. Barrett *ad* 170–266, *ad* 176–190, *ad* 261–263; Halleran 40–41; Knox (1952:18–20); Calvani (1966); Longo (1989:58); Gill (1990b:87–88); Gregory (1991:66–70); Karydas (1998:115–180). For (generally harsh views) of the Old Man, e.g. Owen xxx–xxxi, Lee 30; Walsh (1978) 303–305; Zeitlin (1989:318).

[189] Cf. e.g. Ebbott (2005:369), Rabinowitz (1998:66), and the scholiast on *Choephoroi* 78: δοῦλε δεσποτῶν ἄκουε καὶ δίκαια κἄδικα (= *TrGF* adesp. 11 F436).

[190] With the important exception of Burnett (1971) on *Ion*; see p. 92 below.

[191] Cf. Watson (1995:33–37) who notes Euripides' Phaedra and Creousa as unique exceptions, though she does not acknowledge the roles played by the anonymous characters.

of their responsibility for these deeds, presenting them to the audience in a much more sympathetic light than would otherwise be possible.[192] The unusually active roles of the Nurse and the Old Tutor are therefore carefully designed and closely linked to the sympathetic portrayal of their mistresses, rather than independent focuses of interest.

The Old Servant in *Iphigeneia at Aulis* plays a similar role, although in this case the effect is more complex in accordance with the nature of the action performed. The disclosure of the truth of Iphigenia's sacrifice to Clytaemestra is entirely unexpected; it is, however, essential to Euripides' plot. The intervention of the Old Servant and Agamemnon's absence at this crucial moment ensure the subsequent confrontation and contrast between the splendidly righteous wife and her defensive husband, while demonstrating the king's refusal or inability to take responsibility for his decision.

3.1. *Phaedra and Her Nurse* (Hippolytus)

The traditional story of *Hippolytus* is an old one: an influential married woman unsuccessfully seeks the attentions of an unresponsive younger man, and avenges the rejection by accusing him of rape. The extant play was probably Euripides' second treatment of the story of Hippolytus, Phaedra, and Theseus,[193] and though we have only fragmentary and second-hand evidence for the first, it suggests that the lost *Hippolytus* presented a typical 'Potiphar's wife' sequence, with a brazen Phaedra directly propositioning a horrified Hippolytus.[194] In the extant tragedy, as in his Electra/Orestes

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192 There are of course other ways of doing this; ignorance (e.g. Deianeira in *Trachiniae*) or madness (e.g. Heracles in *HF*) may also moderate an audience's perception of destructive actions.

193 Although Gibert (1997) questions the traditional chronology of the plays, his primary argument (like Griffin's (1989)) is not against this, but against the "moral revisionist" theory. He successfully attacks some of the conventionally accepted reasons for the second version, but not the relative date itself. Hutchinson (2004:24–25) argues for the re-dating of the extant play on metrical grounds; however, he acknowledges that the fragments of the lost play are insufficient to allow for dating, and does not advance other arguments for rethinking the relative order of the plays. Cf. Cropp and Fick (2005).

Euripides probably addressed other versions of this traditional story in his *Stheneboea*, *Phoenix*, and *Peleus*.

194 Esp. Aristophanes *Ra.* 1043, *TrGF* fr. 430N = fr. C. Barrett, and the hypothesis of Aristophanes of Byzantium. Even the papyrus fragments of what "look likely to be hypotheses of tragedies" (Hutchinson 2004:15) suggest this, and Hutchinson's reconstruction of a plot for the lost play that "handled its material adventurously, and did not offer a straightforward telling of the legend" (23) does not contradict this traditional portrayal of Phaedra and Hippolytus.

plays, Euripides is working against long-established convention, and again he works to baffle the audience's expectations of the characterization of the heroes.[195] By replacing the πόρνη criticized by Aristophanes (*Ra.* 1052) with a chaste woman, he makes the balance of sympathies at once more complex and compelling; the villain is eliminated, and all of the human characters become tragic victims.[196] A more interesting and effective innovation would be hard to imagine, but it causes a major logistical problem. Phaedra's secret love must be revealed to Hippolytus in order to trigger the chain of events; but the heroine herself cannot do this without compromising the αἰδώς that is now her defining characteristic.

The solution was ready to hand. It is generally assumed that there was a Nurse in the first *Hippolytus*; though I am unconvinced of this,[197] the introduction of such a character would have been a simple matter, and the loyalty and devotion of such servants to their former charges is, as we have seen, a commonplace of the genre. But Phaedra's Nurse is distinctly uncommon. It is well known that in this play she speaks more lines than anyone except Hippolytus, and her role is very memorable. Of all the anonymous figures in extant tragedy, she has the strongest claim to 'moral agency'; she describes a distinct ethical framework, and the disaster stems from her strong sense of expediency and her failure to understand the sincerity and nobility of Phaedra's resolve to die. She therefore effectively assumes a large part of her mistress' expected role; the function of the traditional Phaedra's shamelessness is performed in this play by the Nurse's devotion to and ethical difference from her mistress.

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[195] See McDermott (2000) for potential internal references to the revision, although many of her readings (including her assumptions about the Nurse) are extremely speculative.

[196] Cf. Davies (2000:56).

[197] Let alone that she played a role of any significance (i.e. engaged in debates with her mistress). It is true that there was a nurse in the *Stheneboea* (of uncertain date) whom Bellerophon describes as a go-between (*TrGF* fr. 661, 10–14), but it is unclear how she was used in the play itself. Despite the implications of *Thesm.* 340–341 (which in any case are not specifically linked to Euripides), in extant plays tragic heroines of unusually strong will, such as Medea and Alcestis, and those who commit adultery, such as Helen in *Troades* and Clytaemestra, may have female servants, but not Nurses or other confidants with whom they discuss their intentions or decisions. The lost Phaedra seems to have more in common with these formidable women than with the more impressionable group still under the influence of authority from their childhood (cf. pp. 13–21 above). It is suggestive that while the Nurse finds a place in most subsequent treatments that present a 'virtuous' Phaedra, she does not appear in Sarah Kane's version, *Phaedra's Love*, or in Henze's concert opera *Phaedra*, both of which present an extreme version of the traditional brazen heroine.

These two qualities are established in the initial exposition of the situation, before the secret is revealed.[198] The expected affection of a nurse for her charge is implied at 188, explicitly stated at 253–260, and demonstrated throughout by the repeated use of the addresses τέκνον and παῖ (203, 212, 223, 238). Her unheroic perspective is clear from her first speech (176–197); in contrast with the chorus' immediately preceding concern, she focuses not on the severity of Phaedra's physical illness, but on the impossibility of making her happy (176–185). These are not quite 'complaints'; she focuses not on the work involved in satisfying her mistress' feverish caprices—indeed, her first concern is for what she should *do* (177)[199]—but on the failure of all her efforts to produce any lasting effect on Phaedra's disordered mind. Like her statement that the carer suffers more than the patient (186–188), it is an indication of her deep love for Phaedra.[200] But it is her concluding thought that is the most telling (193–197): to the Nurse, nothing is more precious than life. This is not stated simply; she first deprecates the human love of imperfect life, but concludes that, since what lies beyond it is unknown, nothing can be cherished more highly. This strict focus on the limitations of human experience[201] prevents her from considering, as Phaedra will (426–427), the possibility that anything in life can be more valuable than life itself. Life is for her the basic condition on which all other mortal goods depend, including the desire for honour and good reputation that drives most tragic heroes, and so transcends them all. The contrast with Phaedra's death-wish is clear, though it is not yet evident that there will be any consequences.

A more extended contrast is demonstrated in their first interaction, with its stark alternation of lyric delirium and prosaic responses. This break in 'contact,' particularly the Nurse's literal interpretation (226–227) of her mistress' delirious wishes (208–211), is not merely due to Phaedra's hysteria;[202] it is also an indication of the fundamental difference between the two characters' perspectives. Phaedra, intent on her own thoughts, is oblivious to the real world that the Nurse tries to bring to her attention, while the slave cannot grasp the symbolism of her mistress' ramblings.

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[198] Cf. Barrett *ad* 170–266: "here on her first appearance the poet is concerned to outline the character from which her action will spring—deeply attached to Phaedra, but impatient, domineering, and with no moral scruple."

[199] Cf. Karydas (1998:122).

[200] Cf. Karydas (1998:124).

[201] Cf. Luschnig (1983:118).

[202] Cf. Mastronarde (1979:75–76).

This, however, does not undermine their mutual affection, which Euripides emphasizes once more before allowing the action of the play to proceed. Phaedra comes back to herself in confusion and weakness that make her appear almost childlike, and begs her μαῖα (243)—and not the impersonal πρόπολοι who are also present (200)—to cover her head. As she does so, the Nurse reasserts her affection as well as her pragmatism; her deprecation of excessive love (259–260) contains wider resonance for the knowing audience, but it also emphasizes the discrepancy between the moderate ideal that the Nurse perceives and her concession to reality in her actions.

With Phaedra's modesty and the Nurse's pragmatic devotion firmly established, the action of the play can proceed. When the chorus turns our focus back to the cause of the illness, Phaedra herself is once again veiled and silent, so it is the Nurse who answers for her and who at 288 renews her efforts to convince her mistress to speak.[203] Again the discrepancy between Phaedra's idealism and the Nurse's pragmatism is emphasized; it is only by chance that the two intersect at the mention of Hipplytus (310). Though Phaedra now engages in stichomythia, there is still no meaningful contact until she recognizes the Nurse's supplication (325 ff.); even then, ten lines pass before she agrees to tell her secret and fifteen lines more before she actually does.

This critical episode is carefully designed to demonstrate Phaedra's nobility; the force of the Nurse's supplication is emphasized (325, 333, 335),[204] as is the fact that it is she and not her mistress who speaks Hippolytus' name (310, 345, 352). This much is virtually uncontested.[205] What is often overlooked is that the Nurse also behaves with conventional propriety; her famous "second thoughts" have tended to eclipse her first. Yet her initial reaction to the news, as her mistress has predicted (327–329), is extreme personal despair (353–361) that surpasses even the chorus' pity; her horror is so emphatic that it may seem almost melodramatic.[206] There is no trace of pragmatism or of moral relativism in these lines; at this moment the Nurse identifies herself entirely with Phaedra.[207]

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[203] For discussion of the significance of speech/silence in the play as a whole, see e.g. Minadeo (1994), Goff (1990:1–26), Longo (1989).

[204] Cf. Gould (1973:86–87 and *passim*).

[205] For an unusual exception see Roisman (1999:47–74).

[206] Cf. Barrett *ad* 354–357: "her distress is admirably brought out by her language: short sentences, asyndeton, repetitions." There is perhaps potential for comedy here, as Michelini (1987:311) claims, but it would be entirely unsuitable to the circumstances to present the scene in this way.

[207] Cf. Karydas (1998:138).

This moment of integration is developed and exploited in the Nurse's famous "second thoughts" (433–481), as her response to Phaedra's famous speech, beginning with the ingratiating δέσποινα, adapts and inverts her mistress' arguments and language.[208] This scene has been amply discussed elsewhere;[209] however it is worth emphasizing that the Nurse argues not that Phaedra should yield to her passion, but that she should not kill herself because of it.[210] She does not yet mention Hippolytus, let alone broach the subject of approaching him, but tries to present Phaedra's passion in terms of common human experience.[211] She simply does not accept the inaction of starvation as a form of action, or death as the cure for an illness; her proposed solution is characteristically practical: ἐπῳδαὶ καὶ λόγοι θελκτήριοι (478).[212]

There is therefore nothing in this speech of which even the chorus can actively disapprove. Phaedra's rejection of the Nurse's argument is an affirmation of her heroic stature, and a crucial onstage re-enactment of her initial decision to die. The difficulty of her course of action, emphasized in her cry at 503–506,[213] is also highlighted throughout this scene by her recognition of the Nurse's eloquence (488, 503, 505) as well as their close relationship; as Gill (1990b:88) argues, "her struggle with Phaedra is thus, in a sense, a struggle *within* Phaedra." When the heroine refuses to yield the close identification of the two women ends; the Nurse's final speech is deliberately ambiguous,[214] signalling her intention to the audience while winning

208 Cf. Gill (1990b:88), Segal (1970:281).

209 Karydas (1998:140–141, 145–147, 154–155) reads this as an *agon*; cf. Halleran *ad* 373–524. For detailed readings of this scene see e.g. Calvani (1966:86–90), Gould (1978:54–57), Karydas (1998:140–161); for focus on Phaedra's speech see e.g. Segal (1970:278–299), Kovacs (1980b:287–303), Luschnig (1988:107), Karydas (1998:140–144).

210 Even with the mythological examples, her emphasis is on the gods' endurance of their "misfortunes" (456–458), not on their yielding (e.g. she mentions Zeus' desire for Semele, not its consummation).

211 As is often noted, she ignores the question of incest entirely. However, she is not alone in this; though Theseus naturally emphasizes this aspect of Hippolytus' alleged crime (943–945, 1040, 1072–1073, 1080–1081, 1165), Phaedra does not mention it in her great speech (407–418), nor does she even use words such as ἀνόσιος (cf. *Phoen.* 1050, *OC* 946) or μίασμα, which might suggest it (cf. Parker (1983:97–98): "Incest [...] lies in a sense beyond pollution, because it is beyond purification"). Nor does the chorus refer to any cases of incest in its ode on the power and victims of Eros (525–564).

212 Although there is some ambiguity as to whether καταστρέφου (477) means 'suppress' or 'put an end to' (cf. Gill (1990b:100 n. 26)), there is no reason at this point to suspect that the Nurse is referring to the satisfaction rather than the termination of the desire.

213 Cf. Barrett ad loc.

214 Cf. e.g. Barrett *ad* 507–524, Karydas (1998:158–160).

Phaedra's trust despite her misgivings (518, 520). Her final line to her mistress[215]—ἔασον, ὦ παῖ · ταῦτ' ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς (521)—reasserts the relationship established in their first scene; the imperative, the intimate vocative (contrasting with the submissive δέσποινα of her opening speech), and the emphasis on her own action and responsibility all suggest the Nurse as an authority over her charge.

The audience is therefore prepared for the autonomy of the Nurse's next actions, and reminded of Phaedra's innocence. The unusual staging technique of 565–600[216] is carefully designed to allow us to observe her horrified reaction and growing despair, giving further evidence of her innocence (and of her awareness of the Nurse's good intentions). When this has been firmly established, the Nurse and Hippolytus appear on stage. It is again impossible to guess what echoes of the first play might have been heard here; however, two new points are crucially emphasized. First, we learn of the oath that Hippolytus has sworn,[217] and second, that he does not distinguish the Nurse's actions from Phaedra's (especially at 649–650, 662, 664).

His conflation of their characters is timely. The Nurse's role is almost played out, as, indeed, is Phaedra's; however, there is one final scene between them which, though brief, is important (682–711). It is here that Phaedra, through her repudiation of the Nurse, at last seizes control of and takes responsibility for the action.[218] It is not the servant's position or attitude that changes in this scene, but the mistress'. The Nurse continues to make utilitarian arguments and to emphasize her good intentions to justify her past actions, and indeed is about to propose a new course of action (704–705). But Phaedra is now able to command her servant's silence as she could not before and sends her away with the resolve to see to her own affairs (709).[219] She appropriates here the Nurse's own deceptively soothing words from 521, as well as the concealment of her intended action from the other characters, if not from the audience.

In these final moments, Euripides' revised narrative joins up with the traditional storyline, and the distinction between the first and second incarnations of the heroine disappears. The moment for shame or brazenness

[215] See e.g. Bain (1977a:28–29), Mastronarde (1979:30, n. 48) for the argument that the last three lines are addressed not to Phaedra, who has possibly left the stage, but to Aphrodite. On potential Sapphic resonance in these lines see Karydas (1998:161).

[216] Cf. Parker (2001:47–50 and bibliography).

[217] *TrGF* 435 = Barrett G suggests that in the equivalent scene no oath was extracted before the revelation, and that Phaedra successfully supplicated Hippolytus.

[218] Cf. Karydas (1998:170–175), who stresses the language of poetic authority.

[219] Cf. p. 17 above.

has passed and the Nurse's role has been fulfilled; what remains now is the vengefulness which is common to both Phaedras and in which the unheroic subordinate has no part. The accusation of rape and its aftermath are entirely the domain of Phaedra, Hippolytus and Theseus, and the Nurse does not appear again.[220]

3.2. *Creousa and the Old Tutor* (Ion)

I have little to add to Burnett's excellent reading of this scene (1971:111–112):

> [Creusa] has, like so many vengeance principals, a comrade (lightening the criminal load of the hero is always one of the dramatist's chief problems in these plots) [...]. The assassination of Ion is left to the ancient tutor of Erechtheus. The old man thus technically separates Creusa from her crime, and at the same time he endows her with positive qualities that act as antidotes to her guilty intention [...].
>
> Creusa's vengeance [...] must in fact be absorbed by the return plot and be lost in her own happy future [...]. The poet thus faces a special problem for he must maintain the seriousness of the threat of death, and yet so lighten the responsibility of the woman who plans it that she can go home in this joyous company. His solution is to increase Creusa's blindness [...]. He uses the irresponsible chorus and the foolish old man as his agents, making it plain that both are motivated by misguided but genuine love for their queen.[221]

A more detailed treatment, however, will help to better illustrate her argument and mine.

Erechtheus' Old Tutor bears a superficial resemblance to Agamemnon's former tutor, especially as presented in Euripides' *Electra*; he too is a faithful family retainer who has survived his first charge but remains devoted to the old bloodline.[222] Unlike his Argive equivalent, however, he possesses no particular knowledge, and his role is to further rather than to remedy ignorance. His appearance is unforeseen; the first indication of his existence is his actual arrival on Creousa's arm in the second half of the play. However, his role in the plot is so crucial that he is the only extant anonymous character whose offstage actions are reported in the messenger speech.

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[220] Cf. Parker (2001:46). The identity of the offstage speaker at 776–787 is unknown and unknowable. The Nurse is mentioned by Artemis (1305–1306) in the exposition of the facts to Theseus, but this is a matter of necessity, as it is crucial to the plot and to the establishment of Phaedra's (and Hippolytus') innocence; there is no mention of her future.

[221] Cf. Lee *ad* 725–1047. Contrast e.g. Gibert (1995:183 n. 49), who takes a much harsher view of Creousa.

[222] Cf. Huys (1995:148–149) on the motif of the loyal servant in exposure stories.

His most important dramatic function, like that of the Nurse in *Hippolytus*, is to maintain the audience's sympathy towards his mistress in the dangerous moments when she decides to revenge herself on Xuthus' 'son.' By having the Old Tutor encourage Creousa's reaction to the news of Ion's adoption and her betrayal by her own husband as well as by Apollo, and above all by having him take a leading role in the planning and execution of the vengeance, Euripides is able to maintain the audience's perception of the heroine as a victim—if not an innocent one—throughout the play. This is particularly important as the revenge plot is not the climax of the play,[223] and Creousa must be able to assume the role of a suppliant.

The Old Tutor is no more a villain than Phaedra's Nurse; though he may not be ἐσθλός as he claims to be in one of the most famous Euripidean passages on slavery (854–856), he is painstakingly introduced as a sympathetic character whose actions are guided by his devotion to the house of Erechtheus. The action of the play is delayed during the Tutor's halting entrance,[224] and the twenty lines of dialogue (725–746) between him and his mistress are invested not only in invoking pity for his old age, but more importantly in establishing and demonstrating the heroine's genuine affection for him. While the devotion of servants to their masters is commonplace,[225] it is rare for it to be explicitly returned in such unequivocal terms as Creousa uses. She counts him among her φίλοι (730), and has brought him to be a comfort in the event of bad news (732). She cares for him as she would for her own father (ἀντικηδεύω πατρός, 734); she helps to support him physically (740), and her manner is solicitous (741, 743) and encouraging (745). At last they reach the stage, and the play can proceed, but not before the audience has been deeply impressed by the mutual respect and affection of mistress and servant.[226] This has the effect not only of establishing the Old Tutor in a positive light, but also of showing Creousa in these moments preceding the crisis as "a woman who knows how to love as well as to hate" (Burnett 1971:111).

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223 Cf. e.g. Lee 269, Burnett cited above, Thornburn (2001:225–230).

224 Cf. p. 20 above. On the effect of the comic aspect of the scene, see Seidensticker (1982:229–230).

225 It is clearly expressed in this play at e.g. 725, 732, 735–737, 763, 765, 808–812, 850–856 if genuine, 925–926, 942–944, 968, 970, 1018, 1039–1044.

226 Zacharia (2003:26–27), however, goes too far in arguing that he acts as a "surrogate" for Erechtheus; there are too many references to his servility connected to their relationship (e.g. 734, 771, 808) while the absence of an Erechthid king is crucial to the play.

As the action of the play resumes and Creousa hears the chorus' misleading account of the prophecy and Xuthus' betrayal, Euripides establishes the Old Tutor's self-controlled pragmatism.[227] Breaking with difficulty into his mistress' laments (763, 765, 769–770), he carefully seeks further details; her disconnected outpourings[228] at each revelation only emphasize the methodical rationality of the Old Tutor's questions. Significantly, it is he who suspects that Xuthus and Creousa may have met with different fates (771–772); his mistress herself has not imagined this possibility. Such a suspicion on her part would have detracted from her portrayal as a devoted wife; however, the old retainer's loyalty to the house of Erechtheus does not include Xuthus, and his wariness reveals the worst of his mistress' suffering.

This bias anticipates the flawed conclusion that the Old Tutor draws (808–858). Significantly, it is prefaced by a clear statement of his loyalty to Creousa and her lineage (808–812), emphasizing the particular cause of his error; as he declares (811–812), there is no malice or deception in his reconstruction of Xuthus' actions. His conclusion is also considerably less foolish than is sometimes believed. Like every other mortal in the play, he is working with incomplete information; however, the truth is both so complex and so fantastic that it is considerably less plausible than the explanations contrived by the human characters.[229] His error stems not from malice or stupidity, but from his belief in the face value of the oracle given to Xuthus (825).

This is one of his most important dramatic functions; his deductions lead Creousa to believe that she has been deliberately victimized not only by the god, but also by the husband that she trusted, calling them both λέκτρων προδότας ἀχαρίστους (880). With nothing left to lose (862–869), she reveals her past wrongs, adding detail and emotion to the sketch of the rape given by Hermes in the prologue. Her monody is the emotional and dramatic centre of the play,[230] playing pivotal roles in the plot, the development of Creousa's character, and the ambiguous portrayal of Apollo. Above all, it is deeply moving, and calls for the audience's wholehearted sympathy

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[227] Boissonade's re-attribution of 753, 755, 763, and 765 to Creousa is well defended by Huys (1993) and Lee *ad* 752–755 and *ad* 763 ff.; the Old Man therefore does not, as e.g. Brandt (1973:85) would have it, respond emotionally to the chorus' revelation until 808. On the relative neutrality of both the Old Tutor's questions and the chorus' answers see Lee *ad* 771–803 (cf. *ad* 808–831).

[228] Cf. Lee *ad* 771–803.

[229] Cf. Zacharia (2003:136 and n. 29) on the similarity between the Old Tutor's reconstruction and Apollo's plan as reported by Hermes.

[230] Cf. Lee 257. For a detailed reading of this scene see Zacharia (2003:78–99).

for the heroine. Euripides even contrives a repetition of the story (925–933) to ensure the audience's comprehension.[231] The emphasis on Creousa's wrongs resulting from this double account is important both in dispelling any nonchalance caused by the audience's confidence in a happy ending, and also in ensuring the audience's sympathy in preparation for the coming scene.

The Old Tutor's emotional reaction is acute but brief (967–968); at 970 he sets aside his grief and proposes action. It is crucial that even the possibility of action has not occurred to Creousa, whose helplessness is emphasized: τί γάρ με χρὴ δρᾶν; ἀπορία τὸ δυστυχεῖν (971). Revenge on Apollo appeals to her, but she protests—not from piety or shame, but because of her powerlessness in the face of τὰ κρείσσω (973) and the possible consequences (975). The Old Tutor's suggestion that she revenge herself on Xuthus provokes a more remarkable refusal. This constraint is internal rather than external; αἰδώς is a powerful force and has been repeatedly shown to be a significant element of Creousa's character (e.g. 336, 395, 861, 934). It is true, as Lee *ad* 977 observes, that "the purpose of her statement is not to rehabilitate X[uthus], but to relegate him to a position of small dramatic importance"; however, it also indicates the deference that Creousa still feels towards her husband, and sustains her presentation as a patient wife.

No such considerations, however, affect her hostility towards Ion, and she seizes readily on the Old Tutor's third proposal. In spite of her eagerness, however, Euripides is careful to delay her part in the planning; just as the servant proposes the victims, he also first suggests a method (980). Creousa points out the obvious flaw, but it is only at the Old Tutor's explicit invitation (984) that she admits to having her own plan in mind. Her role is further minimized in the detailed discussion of the plot; as Burnett says (1971:114–115):[232]

> Creusa is not assuming the absolute responsibility that ordinarily goes with the vengeance role. She is not going to commit the crime, and the poet spends his intrigue scene distracting us even from any consideration of the old man who is to be her agent. [...] When the poet has finished with it, the poison has effaced the poisoner [...].

By 1017, then, Euripides has firmly established the coming attack on Ion while deftly diverting attention away from Creousa. It is only now that

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231 Cf. Zacharia (2003:83). To read the repetition as comic (e.g. Burnett (1971:114)) would be truly grotesque following the monody.

232 Contrast Gibert (1995).

she takes over the planning of the scheme, moving smoothly from the description of the miraculous drugs to the details of their administration. Even now she is not portrayed as an adept plotter; her proposal that Ion should be killed at Athens and the Old Tutor's brusque criticism of it (1021–1026) emphasize her lack of cunning. Similarly, the vehemence with which she looks forward to the death of the innocent Ion (e.g. 1027, 1036–1038) is overshadowed by the more troubling impiety of the Old Tutor's parting lines (1045–1047). Yet his implication that Ion is a πολέμιος as well as an ἐχθρός (1046) leaves the audience with a final impression of both the plotters' sincere belief in the rightness of their actions.

The plan is clever and its execution flawless; as the messenger reports, it is only the intervention of Apollo that saves Ion. It is worth noting that despite his obvious bias[233] the messenger does not play down his mistress' involvement in the attempt; Creousa is mentioned at three crucial points of the central narrative: the opening (1123), the moment of poisoning (1185–1186) and the confession (1216). Now that the heroine has been transformed from a potentially unsympathetic avenger back into a vulnerable victim (e.g. 1111–1112, 1222), the critical moment for mitigating her responsibility has passed. With the messenger speech, the Old Tutor's dramatic role ends as suddenly as it began, and he recedes into the background; he belongs strictly to the vengeance plot, and has no place in the supplication and reunion that follow.

3.3. *Agamemnon and the Old Servant* (IA)

The famously unreliable text of this play makes its study almost as treacherous as working with fragments; detailed discussion is difficult and all generalizations must be heavily qualified. Nevertheless, I wish to make a few observations on the role played by the anonymous Old Servant in the scene in which he reveals the truth to Clytaemestra and Achilles.[234]

Classical accounts of Iphigeneia's sacrifice centre on two important elements: Agamemnon's dilemma, and the moment of sacrifice. While most versions pass discretely (and discreetly) from one to the other,[235] Euripides'

[233] Cf. De Jong (1991:107).

[234] The prologue is too textually problematic to be discussed here; cf. e.g. Kovacs (2003a: 80–84), Bain (1977b), Willink (1971), Stockert ad loc.

[235] In those versions which also give an account of the false marriage to Achilles (e.g. *IT* 24–25, Ps.-Apollodorus *Epitome* 3.21–23, Hyginus *Fabula* 98) no details are given about the way in which the deception is revealed.

plot focuses on the intervening time. Once the deceived Clytaemestra has been brought to Aulis, it is certain that she must be informed of the truth though it is by no means clear when or by whom. It cannot be Agamemnon, who has sustained his deception through their first meeting and explicitly expressed his intention to keep the truth from his wife (539–540). Achilles, appearing at 801, is perhaps a candidate; however, he is soon shown to be allied to Clytaemestra in ignorance as well as in his later reaction to the sacrifice. The chorus is a still more remote possibility; though there is a precedent in the chorus of *Ion* (760–762), the Euboian maidens do not have the same personal attachment to the heroes as Creousa's handmaids. Therefore the most probable expectation after 854 is that a new character—perhaps Talthybius or Odysseus as in other plays—should appear, either on Agamemnon's orders or independently, to reveal the truth.

Instead, the anonymous Old Servant, whose fierce loyalty to his master has been unmistakably demonstrated,[236] returns unbidden to the stage to betray his confidence. There is no parallel for such an abrupt and surreptitious change in allegiance.[237] The involved explanation of his history (855–872), in which he declares his devotion to his mistress rather than his master (871, 877, 895), emphasizes the already striking fact that the Old Servant is disobeying a direct command. This serves not only to highlight the general opposition between Agamemnon and Clytaemestra but also to emphatically dissociate Agamemnon from the disclosure of his scheme. The truth is revealed not only without his consent but also without his knowledge, not by accident but by the design of a slave who suddenly and unexpectedly abandons his hitherto unconditional devotion to his master. Euripides therefore carefully and completely excludes Agamemnon from the moment of revelation.

The dramatic advantage of this exclusion is clear, both in the ensuing scene between Clytaemestra and Achilles and in Clytaemestra's subsequent confrontation with her husband. But more subtle is the effect that it has on at least one aspect of Agamemnon's characterization. The probability of

236 Particularly in his encounter with Menelaus (303–316).

237 The Old Servant in the prologue is both dramatically and literally subordinated to Agamemnon. 46–48, which would anticipate his loyalty to Clytaemestra, are likely to be interpolated. The criticism of Agamemnon at 133–135 is probably also spurious, but even if it is not, or if it has replaced something similar, it does not prepare us for a complete change of loyalty. There are certainly no grounds for interpreting the plural "masters" at 304 and 312 as including Clytaemestra. There is also no parallel for an anonymous character reappearing onstage without external motivation, though we might compare the first appearance of the Servant in *Helen* (cf. pp. 11–12 above).

interpolations throughout the play makes it very difficult to draw any conclusions about his overall presentation; crucial scenes in the prologue and his encounters with Menelaus and Iphigeneia are of doubtful provenance, and the possibility that they have displaced genuine material makes it impossible to reconstruct any such general aspect of the play coherently. Nonetheless, this scene helps to reinforce the essential indecisiveness of Euripides' Agamemnon.[238] Both his vacillations and the sinister irony of his conversation with Iphigeneia are almost conventional in the context of his dilemma; however, in no other account does Agamemnon deny or refuse responsibility for his decision. In this play, however, he twice reverses his decision, and in the end is not even able to reveal it to those most affected. Euripides, by focusing on the deception and the Old Servant's intervention in Agamemnon's absence, draws the audience's attention to the hero's essential lack of conviction.

4. What They Are

The particular identity of any given character in any given genre will always influence his presentation of another figure. For example, as soon as the title 'Nurse' has been attached to a speaker, either explicitly or implicitly,[239] her attachment to her charge will immediately affect to some degree the audience's assessment of her speech. In certain cases, however, Euripides exploits the identity of an anonymous character not merely to colour his portrayal of or interactions with the hero, but to lay the foundations for an innovation in that hero's presentation. The invention of the Autourgos in his *Electra* is one of his key tools in reinventing an old story, while in *Heracleidae* he takes advantage of the explicitly representative qualities of the anonymous Daughter and Herald to shape the audience's perception of the dead Heracles and the (thus far) absent Eurystheus. However, it is possible that this is not a strictly Euripidean technique; Aeschylus may have set a precedent in the Egyptian Herald of his *Supplices*. This hypothesis is based on speculative reconstruction of the lost plays and cannot be proven, but such evidence as is provided by the extant play is suggestive.

[238] Cf. e.g. Burgess (2004:42–48), Gibert (1995: chapter 5), Sorum (1992), de Romilly (1988:29–31) who compares other literary presentations, Siegel (1981) and his summary of earlier bibliography.

[239] Cf. pp. 13–14 above.

4.1. *Electra and the Autourgos*[240] (*Euripides'* Electra)

It is broadly accepted that this play is a deliberate defiance of convention, in which all of the major characters are presented in unusual lights, with particular emphasis on the unconventional portrayal of Electra.[241] Without altering the main facts of the story, Euripides strips away the traditional heroic dignity of both the characters and their context. Electra in particular is brought from the lofty tragic stage to a world in which the convention of her noble suffering is undermined by petty troubles and overwhelmed by domestic concerns.[242] While this transformation is largely effected by the heroes themselves, Electra is given an additional catalyst: the Autourgos. His presence in the play lasts only as long as it takes to establish the unconventional characterization of the heroine, but its effect is profound and all the more successful for its subtlety.

One traditional interpretation is that the Autourgos acts as a foil to both Electra and Orestes,[243] and to a certain extent this is true. Orestes' speech at 367 ff. does invite comparison between the two figures, and it is very easy to contrast, for example, the Autourgos' reception of the guests with his wife's. However, I would argue that this is not his primary function. The patient, hard-working Autourgos possesses many virtues that are not seen elsewhere in this play, but these are not for the most part 'heroic' qualities.[244] His interactions with the named characters are minimal and above all trivial; he has no part in the heroic revenge story that dominates the stage. The importance of his invention lies not in what he does, or even in what he says, but in what he is; through his dual role as Autourgos and Husband, he moves the story and especially its heroine from the mythical context of high tragedy into the familiar mundane world.

He does this literally as well as figuratively. The Autourgos' most immediately obvious effect is the removal to the countryside and the replacement of

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240 The word αὐτουργός is not actually used in this play (the term is possibly borrowed from *Orestes* 918–922), but Electra's Husband is consistently identified as such in the Greek *Dramatis Personae*. Cf. p. 1 n. 1 above.

241 Cf. Section II.2.7 above, and bibliography at p. 74 n. 145.

242 Cf. Michelini (1987:181–193), though her focus on genre leads her to rather different conclusions.

243 This is particularly popular amongst Electra's critics, e.g. do Deserto (1994), Arnott (1981:181) with bibliography at n. 8, and at greater length Basta Donzelli (1978: chap. 7). Lloyd (1986:9), in defence of Electra, sees at least his hospitality as a foil to Clytaemestra and Aegisthus, but does not take into account Electra's own take on *xenia*.

244 Cf. do Deserto (1996 *passim*); see Sheppard (1918b:137–138) on σωφροσύνη and εὐσέβεια. Michelini goes so far as to characterize him as 'comic' (1986:194–198).

the palace by a cottage, which is strongly emphasized throughout the play.[245] Rural settings are exceedingly rare in tragedy, and when they occur in other plays it is always a site that 'depends upon' a hero: the Greek camps at Troy, Philoctetes marooned on Lemnos by Odysseus, or Iphigenia summoned to Aulis by her father. Humble *prologizomenoi* are not common either, but they are in every other case servants speaking before their master's house,[246] and they do not control the setting of the play; we never see them 'below stairs.' It is unique that the Autourgos should deliver the opening speech in what is his own particular environment, before his own home.

This opening speech, however, is uneventful enough, and the strangeness of the setting is softened by the recapitulation of the familiar story—until the word δάμαρτα at 35. This must have come as a great shock to the audience. Electra's unmarried state was so central to her traditional plight that it was conjectured even in ancient times to be eponymous.[247] Aeschylus' Electra expects to marry some day, but only after reclaiming her inheritance (486–488). Sophocles is much more emphatic: his heroine assures Chrysothemis (961–967) that Aegisthus will never let them marry. Euripides' Aegisthus, we are told by the Autourgos, similarly intended simply not to allow a marriage (22–24); however, he then tried to kill her to prevent a secret liaison. There are no details of the plot except—crucially—that it was prevented by Clytaemestra, and instead Electra was married to the speaker who, in spite of his noble lineage, is a 'safe' husband because of his poverty.[248]

Though the Autourgos immediately, fervently, and extensively assures us that this marriage is purely nominal, as he refuses to consummate it

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245 Denniston xii states this backwards when he suggests that the new setting is "an excuse for introducing [...] a sympathetic character drawn from a class which appealed to him strongly." The effects of this change are diverse, and quite subjective. Denniston xii notes some of these, including the avoidance of the practical problem of Orestes' entry into the city, and the enhancement of the horror of the matricide by its ordinary context. For Cropp *ad* 1–212, the "ethical significance" of the rural setting is primarily to establish the Autourgos as a credible speaker. For Luschnig (1995), "the displacement of the setting is a metaphor for the distancing of the characters from their deed in addition to their alienation from each other." Kubo (1967:21–25) also points out the "scenic" effect of the peasant chorus. Cf. also Goldhill (1986:244–247).

246 I.e. the Nurse in *Medea*, the Tutor in S. *Electra*, the Watchman in *Agamemnon*, and the Pythia in *Eumenides*.

247 Xanthus, cited by Aelian *Var. Hist.* 4.26, believed that Electra was originally the Laodice mentioned in the *Iliad*, but acquired a more Cratylean name: ἄλεκτρον οὖσαν καὶ καταγηρῶσαν παρθένον Ἀργεῖοι Ἠλέκτραν ἐκάλεσαν διὰ τὸ ἀμοιρεῖν ἀνδρὸς καὶ μὴ πεπειρᾶσθαι λέκτρου.

248 As Kubo (1967:21–22) points out, the plan of marrying off a royal daughter to a powerless man for fear of her children is a traditional one; that he should choose not to consummate the marriage, however, is an innovation.

(43–53), the effect of the innovation on the audience's perception of Electra[249] cannot be dismissed. By the end of his opening speech, it is clear that although the essential elements—her father's murder, her brother's absence, and her powerlessness to avenge them alone—have not changed, Electra's immediate circumstances are now, due to the Autourgos, very different from those of her Aeschylean and Sophoclean counterparts. She is not sentenced to isolation or to special constraints, nor is she subjected to the particular complaint of the Sophoclean Electra, constant contact with those who have wronged her. She is living now not with her father's killers, but with an unquestionably sympathetic, sincere yeoman of good ancestry if poor fortune, who recognizes and respects her royal status. Her fundamental injuries are not changed, but before she has even appeared onstage, a number of her traditional complaints have already been alleviated by her connection with the Autourgos.

Of course, he is not in a position to exact her vengeance for her; he is dramatically, if not logistically,[250] debarred from this by his poverty and position, as Electra herself is debarred by her gender. Euripides is careful to ensure that such a thing would not occur to the minds of the audience as even a remote possibility; vengeance has no place in the Autourgos' world. Though he anticipates Orestes' return (47 ff.), he speaks only of a brother's grief at his sister's "unlucky" marriage, with no mention of the wider implications of such a return, such as the vengeance and the restoration of Electra's fortunes. Instead, he concludes his monologue with a determined defence of his decision to respect Electra's person (50–54). Both the content and the direct style of these lines are arresting, and focus the audience's attention away from the future revenge and toward the intriguing present.

Electra's entrance and the brief exchange between husband and wife (54–81) seem designed to confirm all of the changes in her situation wrought by the Autourgos. She begins with a conventional sweeping complaint to the heavens, lamenting the great wrongs of her father, herself, and her brother, but includes an assurance that she has not come to a great degree of personal want (57).[251] The Autourgos' first questions to her reveal what was

249 There is no clear innovation thus far in the portrayal of Aegisthus and Clytaemestra; the story is appropriate to the traditional paranoia of the usurper and his queen's sense of self-preservation.

250 Ironically, Orestes later declares himself to be as powerless; at 236 he claims that the exile is ἀσθενής, and is echoed by Electra at 352. This is the same term used by the Autourgos at 39 to describe himself, and by Electra at 267, describing Aegisthus' plan for her to τεκεῖν [...] ἀσθενῆ.

251 There are two further elements of note. First, Agamemnon is mentioned only briefly;

not clear before: though he is poor, there is no need for her to work, and he has told her so repeatedly (66). That she chooses to work in spite of this is a mystery to him, but when she insists, he humours her (77–78). Electra's warm response to the Autourgos shows her appreciation of the respect and courtesy he has shown: she considers him ἴσον θεοῖσιν […] φίλον (67); she has found in him συμφορᾶς κακῆς ἰατρόν (69–70); and it is in gratitude for this that she wants to share in the household work (71–76). There is no reason to question the sincerity of her words, and when they depart the audience is assured both that Electra's lot has been improved by her marriage, and that she appreciates this.

It is also important to remember that to a fifth-century audience this picture of rural life would be a familiar one. To the modern audience, the Autourgos is as far removed from reality as the kings and queens of conventional tragedy, but the poverty that is described in the prologue and repeatedly throughout the play is not an exaggerated extreme, but a plausible approximation of the conditions of the average fifth-century Athenian, who maintained just such an uncomfortable existence by hard manual labour. The predominance of the commonplace—in the setting, in the tasks performed and described, and presumably in the costumes—is essential to Euripides' purpose; through it, the Autourgos takes Electra out of the realm of Aeschylus' symbolic grief and Sophocles' abject suffering into the routine of everyday life.[252] This is presented in the prologue, especially in the exchange between husband and wife, not as a particular hardship but as a change for the better.

It is largely because of this that we may be taken aback by both the subject and the vehemence of Electra's lamentations at her next entrance (112 ff.).

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her intended emphasis may be Aegisthus' hubris, but she illustrates it through her own treatment rather than the regicide and usurpation. Secondly, there is a clear discrepancy in the two accounts of Clytaemestra. Electra's version is conventional; however, while it remains true in the broadest sense, we have just been told that it was Clytaemestra who interceded with Aegisthus to save Electra's life, and that this 'casting out' was the result. The inconsistency might not be a glaring one, particularly in the context of traditional lamentation, but it is the first of many.

[252] Zeitlin (1970:649–650) argues that Euripides' Electra is actually worse off than her Sophoclean and Aeschylean equivalents: "By her banishment from the palace, she is deprived of family, home, and social status, unlike the other Electras." (Cf. Lloyd (1986:2), Cropp xxxv–vi.) It is, however, misleading to suggest that the other Electras "are still members of the royal household"; they are equally "cut off from [their] lawful inheritance," and they share the Euripidean "physical and emotional [and] spiritual isolation." That the marriage to the Autourgos is a "humiliating misalliance" is undeniable; however, the emphasis of the prologue is on Electra's appreciation of her husband's respect and support.

She begins not with the tragic laments for Agamemnon's murder that make up the second strophe and antistrophe, but with complaints that contrast sharply and unexpectedly with her earlier gratitude to her husband. There are some suggestive linguistic echoes that highlight this incongruity; for example, the σχέτλιοι πόνοι which she laments at 120 and again at 135 recall the πόνοι which the Autourgos reproaches her for undertaking unnecessarily at 65, and that she willingly shares at 73. More disconcerting is the reproach of 132–133, which seem to belong in the mouth of another Electra; though she was indeed left "in her father's house" she is emphatically no longer there. These lyric complaints, which would be perfectly suitable in the purely figurative speech of Aeschylus' Electra or the literal wretchedness of Sophocles', are out of place in the mundane Euripidean context; their tragic force is undermined by the domestic assurances of the preceding scene. It is undeniably true that Electra has good grounds for her grievances and that her complaints are in keeping with Greek convention;[253] however, these traditional laments appear inconsistent and incongruous after the prologue of this play.

Her interaction with 'Orestes' messenger' shows the same tension. Of particular interest in the stichomythic exchange is the discussion of her θανάσιμον γάμον (247) and the ἀνὴρ γενναῖος (253). There is some attempt to dissociate the "noble" husband (253, 254, 257, 259, 261, 262) and the "deathly" marriage, particularly at 255 and 258 (though the distinction is not entirely successful, particularly at the transition points at 249 and 264–267). Yet neither the marriage nor the Autourgos is mentioned in Electra's more formal message to Orestes (300 ff.),[254] and her list of physical complaints culminates in a strong reminder of the omission (311–313). Once again, Euripides has Electra speak conventional grievances without acknowledging the striking innovation in her circumstances, and draws the audience's attention to the discrepancy.[255]

The moment now seems ripe for Orestes to reveal his identity and the revenge to be plotted. However, the expected flow of events is interrupted by the sudden reappearance of the Autourgos. In his homely presence, the recognition and vengeance are further postponed; he refers only once to the troubles of Agamemnon and Electra (351), but his mind is on present hospitality rather than future action. His suspicions and curiosity quickly allayed,

253 Cf. Lloyd (1986:2–9).
254 See Arnott (1981:185) for an attack on the validity of the grievances ennumerated here.
255 This is perhaps reinforced by the chorus' use of the term πόσις at (339).

he invites the strangers into his house with a speech of welcome worthy of a Philemon (357–363). Orestes' response is hardly commonplace, as he delays his acceptance to deliver a flattering[256] and heavily ironic speech which plainly invites the audience to evaluate the heroes not by their father's fame, but on their own merits (384–385).[257] Eventually, however, he accepts and the chorus speaks a few conventional lines while he and his companion enter the house.

But Electra's reaction is entirely unconventional. After the disappearance of the guests into the house, she begins to scold her husband for offering hospitality to his 'betters,' replacing the ὦ φίλτατ[ε] (345) of her first welcome with ὦ τλῆμον (404). This exchange is not a clash between the heroic and the mundane; Electra's reaction is not only unreasonable,[258] but distinctly unheroic.[259] More striking still is the sudden shift in her perspective. The heroine who has just now been holding forth on her suffering and her hopes for revenge, on the insolence of her enemies and her father's dishonour—in short, the tragic Electra, insofar as she exists in this play—is suddenly replaced by a flustered woman faced with unanticipated guests. The domesticity of the scene is unmistakeable as the wife berates her husband for unexpectedly inviting guests, then focuses on the mundane problem of contriving provisions 'fit for company.' The impression is completed by the Autourgos' last speech: he will speak to the Old Tutor as she asks, but she must go and play the hostess (420–422); women can always contrive something (422–423); and in any case, there is surely 'enough' in the house (424–425). As he leaves, he speaks in aphoristic echoes of Solon (cf. Cropp ad loc.), reinforcing one last time the humility and simplicity of Electra's new environment.[260]

The Autourgos is not seen again. After his departure, the play proceeds to the traditional tragic elements of recognition, vengeance, and aftermath in which he is replaced by the Old Tutor. His purpose is to ground the

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[256] It is worth noting, however, that Orestes' appreciation does not make him address the Autourgos directly; cf. Mastronarde (1979:88).

[257] Cf. Vellacott (1975:49–51).

[258] The guests have already accepted; Orestes has expressed his appreciation of a πρόθυμος […] ξένος (395) over a wealthy one; there are no reasonable alternatives. The Autourgos is in no way responsible for their being there, but he cannot turn them away without contravening both courtesy and hospitality.

[259] Hospitality is, after all, an intrinsically heroic concept, and even if we doubt Orestes' own words of praise (394–395) Eumaeus provides a clear Odyssean precedent for the acceptability of the humble welcome. The Odyssean resonance is resumed in the recognition of the scar. Cf. Goff (1991:265–267) for further implications of the Odysseus model.

[260] For a 'comic' reading, see Michelini (1987:196–198).

play and its heroine in the commonplace world of rural life, and once this is accomplished his role is played out; the tensions between conventional tragic ideals and mundane realities run their course without him. There is, however, one last glimpse into his future. In the final distribution of fortunes, the Dioscuri command Pylades to reward the Autourgos—for this is presumably their intent—by bringing him to Phocis and bestowing wealth upon him (1286–1287). The statement is very much an *obiter dictum* and might easily pass unnoticed. However, a spectator remembering the Autourgos' insistence on his Mycenean lineage (35–38)—not to mention the emphasis on the misery of exile in this play and throughout Greek literature—and his parting deprecation of the importance of wealth[261] might be struck by the inappropriateness of the reward.[262] The effect of this is not to create pity for the Autourgos any more than his appearances onstage are meant to focus the audience's attention on himself; instead, it adds to the general sense of the shortcomings of divine judgement, and the insufficiency of the resolution that it imposes on the play.[263]

4.2. *Heracles and His Daughter* (Heracleidae)

Heracleidae does not stage a central hero. Instead, a series of focal figures, including the Daughter of Heracles in the second episode of the play, appear in sequence.[264] Although she has a great deal in common with the named heroines (and the one hero) who willingly sacrifice their lives,[265] her anonymity[266] is unique amongst such heroes. It is particularly striking because of the close association of self-sacrifice and κλέος; even in those instances when the hero does not name it as a motivating factor, the chorus

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[261] Denniston comments that the manuscript reading πλούτου βάρος at 1287 is a "strange expression." Herwerden's emendation βάθος (printed in Diggle's OCT) reduces the tension between burden and reward.

[262] Cf. Cropp ad loc.: "he is not being asked whether he wants this transportation and ought not to be impressed with the grant of wealth (cf. 426–431)."

[263] Contra e.g. Thury (1985), who does not consider the fate of the Autourgos.

[264] Compare Burnett (1976:14), Marshall (1998:80–81), Wilkins xxii. Cf. p. 67 above on the absence of Hyllus. This shifting focus, and the corollary importance of absence and representation, may explain the unusual prominence of anonymous figures in the play.

[265] See e.g. O'Connor-Visser (1987), Wilkins (1990a) and (1990b:331), Roselli (2007).

[266] Although she becomes 'Macaria' in Pausanias (1.32.6; cf. Strabo 8.6.19), she is not named in the play; her entry at 474 is unannounced, and while she addresses Iolaus by name (478), he addresses her as παῖ (484) and τέκνον (539, 556). It is extremely unlikely that she was named later in the play in any of the conjectured lacunae; few minor characters are mentioned in their absence.

mentions it as a reward.[267] Heracles' Daughter is no exception; she speaks of dying εὐκλεῶς (534) and asserts her right to be remembered through the finest burial (588–589), while at the end of the scene the chorus consoles Iolaus with the thought that her death is εὐδόκιμον (621) and that she will be honoured for it (οὐδ' ἀκλεής νιν / δόξα πρὸς ἀνθρώπων ὑποδέξεται, 623–624).[268]

But how can εὔκλεια be given to a character without a name? Indeed, the promise of fame is not apparently fulfilled within the play; not only is the Daughter of Heracles anonymous, but there is no description of her death, funeral rites, or any other kind of memorial.[269] The entire episode is reduced by Iolaus to a φροντὶς [...] οἰκεῖος (634), and neither the Daughter nor her sacrifice is ever mentioned again. Alcestis, Polyxena, Iphigeneia, and perhaps even the Macaria of other traditions receive the immortality of reputation which they expected, and are remembered for their sacrifice, but fame depends on the survival of a name and in this play the sacrificial victim has none of her own.

Instead, she is identified by her father's name, and it is Heracles who gains the credit for his daughter's noble deed. Her εὐγένεια is strongly emphasized; there are a significant number of passages in this short scene that refer to the indivisible facts of her noble birth and her noble nature.[270] As Avery demonstrates (1971:540–544), "the daughter is an accurate reflection of the father," and the nobility of her nature not only derives from his but is assimilated into his own reputation.[271] Her εὔκλεια becomes part of his through her anonymity and her absence from the rest of the play. The episode is therefore designed not to demonstrate the nobility of 'Macaria' as an individual, but as a representative of her family and particularly of her father; Heracles, the absent centre of the play, appears onstage through his Daughter.

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[267] See e.g. O'Connor-Visser (1987:204–208).

[268] It is therefore unlikely that her anonymity is intended to increase the pathos of the scene by minimizing the consolation of specific cultic honours, as Allan suggests (Hcl.) 33.

[269] One phrase of the hypothesis has further complicated the implications of this omission: ταύτην μὲν οὖν εὐγενῶς ἀποθανοῦσαν ἐτίμησαν. Cf. e.g. Zuntz (1947:48–49, 51–52), Lesky (1977:233–237). Burian (1977:10) suggests that Euripides omits a report to encourage admiration for her noble choice rather than pity for her death; he does not, however, account for the responses of Iolaus and the chorus. Galeotti Papi (1995) argues that the episode itself is intended as an epitaph.

[270] E.g. 464, 507–510, 513, 525–527, 533, 537–538, 540–541, 553, 563.

[271] Cf. Burnett (1976:15–17).

4.3. *Eurystheus and His Herald* (Heracleidae)

The onstage role of Eurystheus' Herald in *Heracleidae* is very conventional; Euripides' extraordinary use of this character does not become apparent until the end of the play. His role first in the prologue and then in the *agon* of the first episode is simply to instigate the movement of the plot while securing the audience's antipathy for himself and the master for whom he speaks. His own speech and behaviour are crucial in establishing the expectation of the absent Eurystheus' hubris and cowardice, which is maintained throughout the majority of this play and suggested in the mythological tradition as recorded in other sources.[272] Yet while Euripides uses the anonymous Herald to encourage the audience's assumptions about the hero whom he represents, he does not actually commit himself to such a characterization of Eurystheus; he therefore maximizes the unexpectedness of the sudden and unsettling reversal of sympathies in the exodos.

The Herald arrives only fifty lines into the prologue, actually interrupting Iolaus' prolegomena. It is not uncommon for an anonymous character to arrive so early, particularly when bringing bad if expected news,[273] but this is the only extant example of an antagonist, named or anonymous, appearing before the parodos. Lines 19–20 clearly prepare the arrival, but there is little time for anticipation of his appearance.[274] Nor does the tone of Iolaus' prologue encourage this; emotive language is strangely absent not only in the description of the heralds sent by Eurystheus (19–22), but throughout his description of the fugitives' plight (10–11, 23–47) and of their persecution by the Argive king (13–22). In spite of the danger which he and the children face, Iolaus shows no fear or hatred of Eurystheus; the only sentiment that he expresses is αἰδώς (e.g. 6, 28–30, 43), and the only attribute that he ascribes to Eurystheus is ὕβρις (18). He is concerned for the children (40), but the term that he uses (καλχαίνων) suggests intellectual rather than emotional anxiety. The dramatic effect of his prolegomena is therefore not

[272] For hubris e.g. 18, 353–370, 456–460, 932–934, 947, 948, 953–956; for cowardice e.g. 743–746, 813–817, 886–887; for general recrimination e.g. 360–361, 372, 387–388, 924–925. Cf. Avery (1971:558–559). For other traditions see e.g. *Il.* 19.95–125, Herodotus 9.27, Ps.-Apollodorus 2.5.1, and various pictorial representations in *LIMC* (s.v. Eurystheus) of Eurystheus hiding in a jar while Kopreus speaks to Heracles, and of Heracles threatening the cowering Eurystheus with the boar's head.

[273] E.g. the Maidservant in *Andromache* with news of Menelaus' plot, the Tutor in *Medea* with news of impending exile.

[274] Contrast the extended preparation of the Egyptian Herald's entry in Aeschylus' *Supplices* (713–825).

to suggest hatred of the king or fear for the children, but to emphasize Iolaus' own heroic concerns.[275]

The effect of the Herald's arrival is striking. Iolaus' identification of the arrival (49) is followed by the first subjective description of the persecution (50–51),[276] a bitter curse on both the Herald and his master (52), and the first mention of the recollection of the wrongs done to Heracles by the same agency (53–54). The audience is swept up in Iolaus' anger, and the tone is set for the brief but intense activity that precedes the parodos.

Before going any further, however, we must consider the significance of the identification of the Herald as the same envoy who conveyed Eurystheus' commands to Heracles (53–54). Although he is not named in the play, the name Kopreus is commonly attached to this traditional role,[277] so that there is a strong case to be made for his identification. Is the omission of the name significant, or is it simply that his name is so obvious that it does not require explicit mention?[278] It is true that Iolaus, the only person who can identify him, is unlikely to "(politely) use his name" (Allan (Hcl.) 35 n. 61), but there is a clear opportunity for the introduction of the name in his self-presentation to Demophon (134–135).[279] Such an introduction would have been very much in keeping with the nature of the Herald's speech; Demophon has no interest in the Herald as an individual and asks only where he has come from in his surprise at his behaviour (132–133), but as the Herald explicitly and aggressively takes it upon himself to answer the questions that Demophon has not asked,[280] there would have been nothing to prevent a personal introduction had Euripides wanted to draw on Kopreus as a mythological figure in his own right.

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[275] Cf. Burian (1977:4–5), Pozzi (1993:29–30); compare the opening of *HF*.

[276] διωκόμεσθ[α] now replaces the prosaic πέμπων ὅπου [...] κήρυκας (19–20); ἀπεστερημένοι, with the implication of robbery, now replaces the neutral ἐξείργει (20, 25) and ἀπωθώμεσθα (47) as well as the slightly more subjective τητώμενοι (31).

[277] E.g. *Il.* 15.639–640. Another possible argument for the identification is suggested by Philostratus' claim that the Athenian ephebes actually slew Kopreus τοὺς Ἡρακλείδας τοῦ βωμοῦ ἀποσπῶντα (*Vitae Sophistarum*, 550). However, there are no other sources for this account, and there are good reasons for doubting its reliability (cf. Roussel (1941)); it is therefore by no means certain that it was known either to Euripides or to his audience. Demophon's threats (270–273) might be an allusion to Philostratus' version of events, but it is equally plausible that they are meant to illustrate both the fierceness of the king and the extent of the Herald's provocation.

[278] Cf. Allan (Hcl.) 35 n. 61, Wilkins *ad* 55: "The audience can have had no doubt of Copreus' identity."

[279] Cf. Talthybius' clear self-introduction at *Tro.* 237–238.

[280] 134–135: Ἀργεῖός εἰμι · τοῦτο γὰρ θέλεις μαθεῖν · / ἐφ' οἷσι δ' ἥκω καὶ παρ' οὗ λέγειν θέλω.

There might have been some advantage in doing so, given the resonance of what little we know of Kopreus' personal tradition with the themes of the play. Although the literal meanings of personal names cannot be taken at face value in Greek or in any other language, the association of Kopreus with κόπρος might easily have been exploited.[281] Homer gives the name of his son, Periphetes, whom he describes as the good son of a much worse father (ἐκ πατρὸς πολὺ χείρονος υἱὸς ἀμείνων, *Il.* 15.641); this might have been related to the recurrent theme of children matching their fathers' virtue.[282] Ps.-Apollodorus 2.5.1 gives an extremely pertinent account of Kopreus' past, of which many elements might have been suggestively introduced into this play: his non-Argive origin,[283] his murder of Iphitus and flight into exile, and his purification by Eurystheus.

Yet Euripides mentions neither the name to which these details are attached, nor the details themselves; he states only that the Herald is the agent of Eurystheus in the persecution of Heracles and his children. Thus, Euripides does not encourage the audience to recall the Kopreus legend. In fact, the only traditional element that he alludes to might be said to belong not to Kopreus' tradition, but to Eurystheus'. When Iolaus identifies the new arrival (πολλὰ δὴ καὶ τῶνδε γενναίῳ πατρὶ / ἐκ τοῦδε ταὐτοῦ στόματος ἤγγειλας κακά, 53–54), the emphasis is on his intermediary function, not on any personal injury he has performed as an independent agent. In the case of Eurystheus' Herald this reference has particular resonance, as the most famous depiction of the three men[284] presented the terrified Eurystheus hiding in a *pithos* and sending his commands to Heracles through his herald. The emphasis on the Herald's function and the omission of his name therefore invite the audience to remember not the servant's own mythological background but the traditional cowardice of his master.[285]

When the Herald arrives onstage, then, it is not as an individual in his own right, but as Eurytheus' representative. Even if the audience does not

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281 There are almost fifty recorded instances of "copronyms" in the *LGPN* to date and their particular implications are unclear; cf. Janko on *Il.* 15.638–652, Pomeroy (1986), Masson (1996) and their bibliographies. Yet even if the historical name is neutral or apotropaic, tragedy often draws on onomastic word-play for dramatic effect (e.g. *Ag.* 681–690, *Aj.* 430–431, *PV* 85–87).

282 Cf. Avery (1971:540–553).

283 At 134 and 139 he declares himself to be Argive, not Elean as in Ps.-Apollodorus.

284 Cf. p. 107 n. 272 above.

285 Euripides may even be encouraging the audience to see Eurystheus' absence as an indication of cowardice, even though the sending of a herald would have been perfectly in accordance with both tragic and historical convention.

react to Iolaus' initial identification of the new arrival, the Herald's part in the exchange that follows must provoke antipathy as he demonstrates first insolence of speech (55–63) and then impiety and violence of action (64–76). The striking of Iolaus is particularly shocking; although the possibility of such forceful action is raised in several plays, it is actually carried out onstage only in this scene and in Aeschylus' *Supplices*,[286] and it is especially appalling that it is done by a herald, who is himself protected from violence by common Greek religious observance as is emphasized later on in the play.[287] Yet while it is stressed that these are the actions of the Herald himself (e.g. 63, 67), the prominent introduction of Eurystheus' name in his insult to both Iolaus and Athens (58) and in the words that accompany his violent disregard of the sanctity of the altar (68) encourages the association of the master with his servant's outrages.

The parodos moves the play back from action to speech. But though he ceases his physical attack, the Herald maintains his offensiveness throughout his brief exchange with the chorus, describing the Heracleidae as if they are escaped slaves (99–100, 105), admitting the impiety of his action (107–108), threatening and belittling the chorus (109–110, 117). Thus, when Demophon and Acamas arrive, the chorus reports the Herald's actions in such a way (127–129) as to ensure the shocked and indignant response that they in fact elicit (130–133). The *agon* that ensues is therefore not argued before an impartial audience, either internal or external. Although Lloyd (1992:73) is largely right in saying that heralds are not "individuals whose personal motives and characteristics command any interest in themselves," they can nonetheless be characterized, and in this case there is certainly no "impersonal tone [...] imparted by the involvement of the Herald." His introduction in such an unfavourable light must prejudice all hearers against his case, however logical or well presented in itself.[288]

It hardly seems necessary to point out the many repellent aspects of his part in the *agon*, in which he repeatedly insults not only Iolaus and his charges but also the 'judge' whom he hopes to persuade. A more interesting

[286] Cf. pp. 118–119 below.

[287] 270–273. Cf. Goblot-Cahen (1999). The Herald departs so far from the conventional mould (cf. 130–133) that the audience may well have a sneaking sympathy with Demophon's impulse to disregard his nominal heraldic status; contrast the traditionally passive role of Homeric and historic heralds, cf. p. 23 above.

[288] Although the faults of Eurystheus and his Herald find no place in Iolaus' *agon* speech (which is presumably the reason why Lloyd overlooks them), they have been too firmly established to be ignored.

aspect of the debate is that while the Herald begins his long *rhesis* with clear emphasis on his subordination to Eurystheus (136–137) and speaking in the first person singular, he soon turns to the plural (142–173). At 174 he reverts again to the singular; of particular interest is that he now refers to the Heracleidae not as Εὐρυσθέως as at 68 and 105 (and implied at 99–100), but as τἄμ[α] (175). He continues to use the singular in the stichomythia with Demophon,[289] as he similarly announces his intention of seizing τοὺς ἐμούς (267).

The alternation between these modes of speech is subtle, but encourages the audience to conflate the servant and his master. This is not to say that he assumes Eurystheus' identity; he mentions him by name at 156, Demophon clearly distinguishes them at 250, and the chorus reminds the audience as well as their king of his status at 271–273. Nevertheless, the audience is encouraged to associate Eurystheus and his representative, and in his parting speech the Herald's prediction of his master's reaction (280–281) leads naturally to one last reversion to the plural in his final threat.

Thus, the Herald functions both literally and dramatically as the representative of Eurystheus before it is practical to bring that character onstage, encouraging negative expectations of the Argive king by his own appalling speech and actions.[290] When this is taken in conjunction with the reproaches addressed to Eurystheus throughout the play and in other sources, the audience must expect that he will appear as the typical hybristic, violent, malicious tyrant, further blackened by the shame of cowardice: in short, a slight variation on the Herald of the prologue.

This expectation is deceived even before Eurystheus' first words at 983, for the man who enters at 928 is not, like his Herald, a young man of violence. There has not been a single word to remind us that Heracles' enemy must himself be an old man, in contrast to the continual emphasis on the old age and infirmity of Iolaus, whom Euripides seems to have made Heracles' contemporary and not his nephew.[291] Before his appearance, we are in fact encouraged by his agent and his enemies alike to picture the Argive king as a vigorous man in the prime of life;[292] we might almost

289 Which may be "plain in style" (Lloyd (1992:76)) but is full of appalling statements.

290 Though the chorus scornfully assumes that the Herald will exaggerate the tale to his master (292–293), they do not question the accuracy of his report to them.

291 Cf. Avery (1971:553–555), Falkner (1995:181 ≈ 1989:116).

292 E.g. δύναμιν [...] Εὐρυσθέως (58), Εὐρυσθέως ἰσχύν ἅπασαν (156–157), λαμπρός (i.e. with anger) (280), ταχὺς γὰρ Ἄργει πᾶς ἀνὴρ βοηδρόμος (339), οὐ σοὶ μόνῳ ἔγχος οὐδ' / ἰτέα κατάχαλκος (375–376), πολέμων ἐραστά (377), description of his military planning (394–397), Hyllus'

assume that Euripides had taken another chronological liberty, for not even Eurystheus himself refers directly to his old age. However, he admits that he is Alcmene's own cousin (specifically an αὐτανέψιος, 987, and not just a general συγγενής), agreeing with the mythological tradition; it can therefore be deduced that his costuming would indicate this through e.g. a white beard. His appearance upon entry must then in itself begin to raise the audience's doubts.

The play moves swiftly to its conclusion, and Eurystheus is given only two speeches, but, as is generally recognized, these are enough to bear out the complete reversal of the expectations set up by the Herald and in the course of the play, and to blur the lines that divide Alcmene and her enemy.[293] Charged with hubris and cowardice by his detractors and his representative alike, he must tread a fine line in this final scene to avoid incurring censure, and does so admirably.[294] His first words are a firm and almost proud refusal to show any δειλία (985) in spite of his critical position. He does not cling to life but faces death with equanimity (1016–1017, 1026), going so far as to give an additional incentive for his execution in his revelation of the prophecy (1026–1037). His explanation of his offences against Heracles is cogent, given the traditional role of Hera both as Heracles' enemy and as the patron of Argos,[295] and his fear of the Heracleidae is not presented as cowardly, cruel, or hubristic but simply as pragmatic (as suggested by Demophon at 465–470).[296] There is no malice or insolence in his speech; he acknowledges Heracles' virtues (998–999), and his praise of Athens (1012–1013) contrasts sharply with his Herald's insults.[297] In short, Eurystheus is presented in his

challenge and the criticism of its refusal (808–814). Cf. Avery (1971:560), who argues that Eurystheus "stand[s] between the generations before and after Heracles."

293 On the parallels between Eurystheus and Hecuba see e.g. Avery (1971:558–560) with bibliography, Burian (1977:17).

294 This is not to say that Euripides portrays him entirely as the προστρόπαιον γενναῖον (1015) he claims to be; Pozzi (1993:33–34) goes too far in suggesting that he becomes a new "surrogate of Heracles." Stoessl (1956) similarly overstates the case at 218–221, in spite of his admission at 210 that Eurystheus does not occupy a central role in the play. It may be impressive that he asks no mercy, but we cannot forget that he has shown none himself (cf. Burian (1977:3)). In particular, the discomfort caused by his death stems not from the greatness of his own character, but from Alcmene's implacable disregard of the will of Athens (cf. p. 69 above).

295 Cf. 249, and his unreproachful explanation that it is reliance on Hera above Apollo that has at last led to his downfall (1039–1040).

296 Cf. Zuntz (1963:35): "A coward? Is it cowardly to fear what you know to be stronger than yourself? It is, at any rate, '*Realpolitik*'."

297 Both of these articles of his defence are clever and may be suspected to be merely

defeat as a dignified, practical man who helps his friends and harms his enemies: not quite a 'sympathetic' character, but quite the reverse of the Herald in the opening scenes of the play and of the mythological Eurystheus to whom Kopreus belongs.

In this play, Euripides is not simply presenting a traditional character in an unconventional way, as he does (for example) with Electra, Orestes, and Helen. The playwright here draws upon the traditional image of Eurystheus throughout the play until the very moment of his entrance, when it is suddenly refuted and transformed. This is a considerably more complex process, and the Herald is one of the most important tools by which he achieves his end; by encouraging the audience to transfer their antipathy for the agent to his master, but without actually substantiating their assumptions, he is able to bring about the surprising ending. One of the greatest advantages of using an anonymous character to accomplish is that it is dramatically plausible; the audience, in spite of its surprise, is exceedingly unlikely to speculate as to why the Herald has presented his master in such a light, or whether he was acting on his own initiative in ignoring the sanctity of the altar. Such questions of his own characterization simply do not arise; though the impression he has left of his master endures throughout the play, the Herald himself fades away once he leaves the stage.

4.4. *The Egyptians and Their Herald?* (*Aeschylus'* Supplices *and* Aegyptioi)

Aeschylus' *Supplices* is a much less eventful play than *Heracleidae*; accordingly, the Egyptians' Herald, the "villain of the play and also its most entertaining character,"[298] seems to play a much more substantial role than Eurystheus'. Though his actual conflict with the Danaids and with Pelasgus is neither longer nor more exciting than the equivalent scenes in *Heracleidae*, his arrival is much more spectacular. It is carefully prepared throughout the first part of the play and comes as the climax of the action; it is with the Herald's rout, and not his masters' defeat, that the play ends. The end of the play, however, is not the end of the story, for Aeschylus is working within the larger scale of a connected trilogy. The loss of the two other plays—and indeed the uncertainty as to their very titles as well as the order in which

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expedient or actually insolent (e.g. Burnett (1998:154)). However, that they are obviously designed to appeal to their audience does not in itself reflect on their sincerity; they are certainly plausible, and (significantly) are not challenged by Alcmene or the chorus.

[298] FJW *ad* 882 ff.

they were presented[299]—requires the modern interpreter either to consider only the extant play in itself, which is obviously unsatisfactory, or to speculate on the content of the lost plays, which, in cases such as this where little or no evidence exists, is a very enjoyable exercise in futility.[300]

Fortunately, it is sufficient for my purposes to read the extant play with an eye on the skeleton framework of the mythological tradition that is most likely to have been covered by the two lost plays, without attempting to fill in the details. Garvie (2006:164–166) carefully compares the different sources for the myth that have survived, and concludes that there are four basic elements that Aeschylus almost certainly included: the identity and progeny of the two brothers; their quarrel; the marriage of the cousins; and the deaths of the Aegyptioi at the hands of the Danaids, with only Lynceus spared by Hypermestra. To these I would add a fifth. While there is "little unanimity on the consequences of the murder" (Garvie 2006:165), there is one development included in at least five accounts[301] and not contradicted by any other: Lynceus later assumes the throne of Argos.

What is relevant to my particular interest is the strong probability that the masters of the Egyptian Herald have not yet appeared to the audience, and do appear onstage in at least one play following *Supplices* not as persecutors but as the victims of a deceptive murder.[302] It is impossible to determine what the circumstances were that made the killings emotively or ethically ambiguous, but that they were in some way problematic can be safely assumed; given the relationship between the Danaids and the Aegyptioi, a 'straightforward' death, such as that of Aegisthus in the *Oresteia* or Lycus in *HF*, is out of the question. It is unclear whether the emotional impact of the murders was lessened by the unsympathetic portrayal of the victims, such as that of Clytaemestra in *Choephoroi*, or whether it was aggravated,

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299 I take the majority view (cf. e.g. Papadopoulou (2011:19), Sommerstein (2010:101), Garvie (2006: chapter 5), FJW (I 40ff.), Winnington-Ingram (1983: chapter 3), Conacher (1996:104ff.)), that the trilogy probably consisted of *Supplices*, *Aigyptioi*, and *Danaides*. See e.g. Taplin (1977:194ff.) for reservations, Rösler (1993) for an alternative. Whatever the names of the other plays, and whatever the order, it is certain that *Supplices* is not the last.

300 See e.g. the fantastic reconstructions of Turner (2001:36–39) and Sommerstein (2010:103–107). Cf. Winnington-Ingram (1983:55), Papadopoulou (2011:17–24).

301 Ps.-Apollodorus 2.2.1, Pausanias 2.16.1, Pindar *Nem.* 10.10, Σ *Hec.* 886, Σ *Or.* 872. Cf. Papadopoulou (2011:25–30).

302 This significance of this is also discussed by Turner (2001), who also essentially comes to the conclusion that the Egyptians (through Lynceus) become sympathetic; however, his insistence on applying the usual suppliant drama framework of "a persecutor, a victim, and a protector" to the whole trilogy, even though there is very little to suggest such a view of the other two plays, leads him to very unconvincing conclusions about both Argos and Lynceus.

like the death of Cassandra and the matricide in Euripides' *Electra*, by positive characterization. However, Hypermestra's clemency and the probable ascension of Lynceus to the Argive throne argue strongly for the latter; it is unlikely that the already conspicuous sparing of an intended victim should benefit an unsympathetic character, and less likely still that such a character should eventually ascend to the throne. It is possible that Lynceus was singled out as the only 'good' Egyptian; this, however, is not suggested in any of the sources. I therefore argue that when the Aegyptioi finally arrive onstage they are, if not positively sympathetic, then certainly not as heinous as is suggested in *Supplices*.

If this is the case, then Aeschylus must somehow transform the Aegyptioi from the hated persecutors of *Supplices* to the sympathetic victims of the end of the trilogy. This seems to be greatly facilitated, as in *Heracleidae*, by the invention of the Herald who arrives to represent his masters' interests. This agent of the Egyptians not only directs the plot towards the Egyptian-Argive war but also, through his association with his masters, provides the validation of all of the fears and hatred of the Danaids in both his speech and his actions; this is crucial in maintaining the audience's sympathy for the suppliants and antipathy toward their persecutors in this play.[303] However, the fundamental distinction between the Herald and his masters also allows Aeschylus the freedom to present the Aegyptioi in a more positive light in the next play(s).

Before I turn to the examination of the Herald's scene, it must be noted that this passage is unfortunately very textually uncertain.[304] Several full speeches and many individual lines can only be precariously reconstructed, and the order of the lines is disputed at 872–885 and 905–911. Though no change of speaker is indicated in the manuscripts from 825–871, it is clear that several changes are needed; the text is also particularly corrupt.[305]

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303 The corollary question is equally valid—how does Aeschylus change the Danaids from the victims of *Supplices* to the persecutors of the end of the trilogy? Turner (2001:28–36, especially 35) points out that the claims of the suppliants both to the sympathy of the audience (29–32) and to the protection of Argos (33–34) are problematic. Furthermore, their supplication does not conform to the Greek pattern of powerlessness supplicating power, with implied divine retribution for refusal, but is based on the disquieting power of their explicit threat of suicide. The arrival of the Herald, in this interpretation, provides necessary reassurance that Pelasgus' compliance with their demand is justified.

304 Presumably, the usual corruption found throughout the manuscript was aggravated by attempts to interpret the 'broken Greek' that Aeschylus used to emphasize the Egyptian strangeness; see further FJW *ad* 825–902.

305 West (1990) and FJW add other lines, based on reconstructions of text that is so fragmented as to be of little use in characterization. I will not attempt textual criticism of

Furthermore, it is unclear whether the lyrics at 836–842, 847–853, and 859–865 should be assigned to the Herald, or to a secondary chorus of Egyptians as first proposed by Wilamowitz.[306] The debate is well summarized by FJW *ad* 825–902, who give seven arguments and counter-arguments,[307] and then conclude that "the only aspect of these lyrics which is really difficult to reconcile with their attribution to the Herald is their excitable tone, which contrasts sharply, and very effectively, with the cool, and sometimes sarcastic, tone of the trimeters he speaks to the Danaids (873 ff.) and to Pelasgus (916 ff.)." This is hardly persuasive; the difference between lyric and trimeter is often marked, and "tone" need not be consistent. The absence of any clear indications in the text suggests to me that the Herald is not accompanied by a singing chorus, but that he is either alone or accompanied only by a few silent attendants.[308] I will therefore include the lyrics beginning at 836 in my examination of the Herald's role.

Before he even sets foot on stage, however, certain expectations of the new arrival are laid out by the Danaids. This is done throughout the play, but nowhere as clearly and effectively as at 736–824, when the sight of the approaching ship stirs up their fears and provokes an outpouring of their abhorrence of the μάργον Αἰγύπτου γένος (741). Their cousins are called malicious (οὐλόφρονες, 750), cunning (δολομήτιδες δυσάγνοις φρεσίν, 750–751), arrogant (περίφρονες δ' ἄγαν ἀνιέρῳ μένει [...] κυνοθρασεῖς, 757–758; ὕβρει δύσφορον, 817–818), voracious (μεμαργωμένοι, 758), violent (μάχης τ' ἄπληστον, 742; αἱματηρῶν ἀνοσίων τε κνωδάλων, 762; βίαια δίζηνται λαβεῖν, 821) and above all, impious (κόρακες ὥστε, βωμῶν ἀλέγοντες οὐδέν, 751–752; οὐ μὴ τριαίνας τάσδε καὶ θεῶν σέβη δείσαντες, 755–756; θεῶν οὐδὲν ἐπαΐοντες, 758–759; ἀνοσίων, 762). The length and vividness of this passage creates a powerful and terrifying image of the Aegyptioi.

We are therefore well prepared for the outcry at the Herald's entry at 825.[309] In fact, the Danaids' language, as far as it can be deciphered, does

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the section, but as I cannot ignore the problem entirely I will briefly mention only those points that I believe are both relevant and sufficiently supported to allow an opinion.

306 Wilamowitz (1929:461).

307 See West (1990:152–153) for additional arguments for the secondary chorus; McCall (1976) and Lloyd-Jones (1964:365–369) for arguments against.

308 See Taplin (1977:217 and 235–237) for the distinction between this scene and those requiring secondary choruses. For the Herald to appear alone or with only a few silent companions would also be more consistent with the practice of Greek historic and Homeric heralds who, because of their passive role and consequent inviolability, did not travel with attendants (unlike ambassadors); as he is Egyptian, however, this is by no means certain.

309 Cf. Taplin (1977:217–218). A proper close reading of the text is, unfortunately, imprac-

not give any indication that the Herald is not one of the Aegyptioi; only his costume might identify him for the audience. They point him out as ὅδε μάρπις (826),[310] and they consider his arrival the φροίμια [...] πόνων βιαίων (830), while βλοσυρόφρονα and δύσφορα (834) pick up on the description of the Aegyptioi at 818. The chorus here and throughout this scene identify the Herald fully with their cousins; the audience is therefore encouraged to equate the two in the scene to come.

The Herald fulfils all of their expectations, alternating intimidation and commands. He has not come as a messenger to deliver the demand that the Danaids be surrendered to their cousins, and he does not look for a local authority to hear the request (cf. 919–920); he does not seek or anticipate any Argive intervention. His task is to ensure that they return to the Egyptians with or without their consent (862–863). His language, particularly in the lyrics, accordingly consists almost exclusively of commands (839, 841, 849, 852, 861–864) and threats (839–840, 847). What is perhaps surprising is the graphic extremity of the latter, which, in addition to its dramatic effect, has suggestive implications for the Herald's role. The hapax στιγμοί (839), with its probable implications of branding, suggests the perception of the women as literal slaves;[311] while this enhances the Herald's portrayal as a persecutor, it is hardly in keeping with the marital plans of his masters. Even more extreme is the threat of beheading (840–841). The effectiveness of these threats, and of the curses that accompany them, depends on their delivery by the Herald, and not by the Aegyptioi who ultimately want (and will win) their cousins as brides.[312] Though this distinction is not noticeable in the context of this play, it allows for more flexibility in the later portrayal of the Aegyptioi without detracting from the real threat presented in this scene.

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tical because of the level of corruption, especially in the Herald's lyrics; I will therefore be restricted to more general comment.

310 Compare Danaus' (un-Greek) anticipation, upon seeing the Egyptian ship, that a herald or ambassador will attempt to physically and forcefully seize his daughters (727–728: ἴσως γὰρ ἂν κῆρύξ τις ἢ πρέσβη μόλοι / ἄγειν θέλοντες, ῥυσίων ἐφάπτορες). It is the physical element of ἐφάπτωρ that I mean to stress here; however, the word is also highly resonant in the context of the myth of Io, e.g. 45f., but esp. 313–315—καὶ Ζεύς γ' ἐφάπτωρ χειρὶ φιτύει γόνον, [...] Ἔπαφος, ἀληθῶς ῥυσίων ἐπώνυμος—and 535, which invokes Zeus as ἔφαπτορ Ἰοῦς. Though Murray's conclusions rely on an untenable link with *PV*, his discussion of this image is valuable (1958:32–37, 65–67). In 727–728 specifically, however, the sexual implications are rather incongruous with "some herald or ambassador."

311 See FJW ad loc.; compare τἄμ' ὀλωλότ[α] at 918.

312 Cf. FJW ad loc.

The Danaids continue to encourage the conflation of the Herald and his masters. Their only oblique reference to the sons of Aegpytus in this exchange is the phrase δεσποσίῳ ξὺν ὕβρει (845); however, the hapax δεσπόσιος admirably blurs the line between the representative and his own masters, implying both the Herald's own "masterful hubris" and "hubristic masters." Otherwise they identify the Herald wholly with his masters, wishing four times for his death (843–846, 854–857, 867–871, 876–881), in terms very comparable to their opening wish for that of the Aegyptioi (29–39).

At 884, however, the chorus changes register; the curses are dropped and they do indeed begin calling upon the gods as the Herald has commanded. Although Taplin (1977:216) argues that "the text does not indicate that the physical action ever gets beyond threats," the reaction of the Danaids here strongly suggests that it does.[313] The timing of the change from cursing the Herald to entreating the gods makes best sense if the sanctuary of the altar is now being violated.[314] Furthermore, the chorus cries: "he leads me ⟨away⟩" (885).[315] The sudden outcry is in keeping with classical legal customs; FJW (*ad* 905) note that "unless an act of violence met with immediate audible protest in the form of a call for succour [...] the wronged party had no legal case for redress; in particular, a woman who failed to cry out when she was carried off was deemed in law to have assented."[316]

The Herald has begun to do precisely what the Danaids predicted the Aegyptioi would do, and what they entreated Pelasgus to prevent (423 ff.), and the shift from speech to action marks a crucial break with the herald's traditional role. He reacts now to the chorus' prayer (893–894) with the first explicit expression of his irreverence towards the Greek gods, which is anticipated by the contempt implicit in his command at 872, physically demonstrated in his laying hands upon the suppliants, and further explained in his exchange with Pelasgus (921–922). He continues to voice his threats as he

313 Cf. FJW *ad* 885–887, 905–910, 905. At the very least the violence must be heavily implied; the women on stage do not doubt the Herald's willingness or his ability to carry out his threats, and if the actors allow the audience to do so, the scene will fall flat. It must be the arrival of Pelasgus and his retinue, and no mere convention or weakness of the Herald's, that prevents the execution of his violent threats.

314 The most common reconstruction of the corrupted text, βρέτεος ἄρος ἄτα, would support this interpretation.

315 The sense is clear, whether we read Bothe's μάλα δ' ἄγει or Schütz' μ' ἄλάδ' ἀγει for the MSS μαλδα ἄγει.

316 Though FJW apply this only to the formal appeals to human authorities at 905 and 908, it may easily be extended to the entreaty of the gods Earth and Zeus at 890–892, especially given the repetition at 899–901.

begins to enact them (903–904), and the chorus replies by finally crying to the rulers for help (905).[317]

When there is no response but a continuation of the Herald's threats (909–910), the Danaids cry for the aid of Pelasgus ἄναξ (908), drawing a clever bit of word-play from the Herald, and the first explicit mention of the Aegyptioi in this scene (906–907). The timing of this reminder of the disjunction between himself and the Aegyptioi is very deliberate, for following Heath's line order it coincides with Pelasgus' entrance, preparing the audience for the scene in which the Herald will resume his more formal role.

While Pelasgus' arrival puts an end to the attempt to remove the Danaids by force, and changes the quality of the dramatic tension, it does not affect the Herald's portrayal. His arrogance (916–918) and disrespect for Greek custom and religion (921–923)[318] are absolutely undaunted, and he remains confident in the injustice and wrongness of the king's actions and in the justice and rightness of his own.[319] More importantly for our purposes, he does not initially identify himself, nor is he asked to do so, and during the initial exchange with Pelasgus neither he nor the Argive king refers to the fact that he is an intermediary or mentions the men on whose behalf he is acting. The constant use of first and second person singulars, and particularly the expressions ἐμοί (916) and τἄμ' ὀλωλόθ' (918), minimize the fact that the Herald is not in fact a principal.

The Danaids are vindicated by the stichomythia, and the Herald's demands are rejected. When all else has failed—including his claim to *xenia* (925–927)—he falls back on his last defence and the source of his authority: the first mention in this exchange of the Aegyptioi (928). When Pelasgus scorns this threat, the Herald emphasizes his intermediary role still further,

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317 The line order here is clearly disturbed, as 906–907 must follow 908; FJW convincingly defend Heath's line order (905, 909–910, 908, 906–907) as against Wilamowitz' (908, 906–907, 905, 909–910).

318 FJW (*ad* 920) argue that claiming Hermes as his πρόξενος "really amounts to a wholesale rejection of the institution of προξενία which Pelasgus' question in 919 formally assumes him to respect." The peculiar hapax μαστήριος is not an attested cult-name, nor a function usually associated with Hermes. FJW suggest that it "may possibly reflect Aeschylean knowledge of the etymology connecting Hermes' epithets ἐριούνης and ἐριούνιος with ἐρευνᾶν." However, such subtlety seems inappropriate to the blasphemous foreigner, however well-informed. If the epithet is taken roughly as "who helps me in my search," then "Hermes" might be an oblique periphrasis for the status—and the inviolability—of Greek heralds.

319 This may recall the legal ambiguity of the Danaids' position, which Pelasgus questioned earlier (386 ff.); cf. Turner (2001).

falling back on the traditional herald's role of passive messenger (930–933). He does not lose confidence in the rightness of his cause, but he shifts the emphasis away from his actions to his report, and so to his masters. His insolence does not diminish either; from the safety of his newly assumed messenger's role, he demands the king's name and delivers scarcely veiled threats (932–937). Pelasgus responds with equal contempt and confidence, and the Herald departs at last, leaving the audience prepared for the conflict that is likely to have followed.

Aeschylus therefore confirms the impression of the Aegyptioi given by the Danaids, securing the audience's sympathy for the suppliants and apparently justifying their fears. He achieves this effect not by portraying the Egyptians directly, but by representing them through a repellent Herald and encouraging the audience to imitate the Danaids' own identification of his repellent speech and behaviour with those of his masters. This distinction, though only subtly perceptible in this play, leaves the playwright with the freedom to adjust the audience's sympathies in the remainder of the trilogy, and to recast Lynceus and his brothers in a positive light.

CHAPTER THREE

SPECIAL CASES

Fraenkel's phrase, "a grammar of dramatic technique" (*Ag.* II 305), has proved extremely popular with scholars, and the present study may be considered one of many attempts to add to this notional tome. No grammar, however, is without exceptions, and chance has preserved for us three particularly exceptional cases that fully explore the boundaries between anonymity and naming. The Queen in *Persae* is the protagonist of her play in more ways than one, and seems to have little in common with the typically inconspicuous nameless character; yet Aeschylus does not give her a name. The opposite situation is illustrated by the Nurse in *Choephoroi*, who plays a brief supporting role like most other anonymous characters, but is called 'Cilissa.' Finally, Euripides' *Ion* shows us a character who is actually named in the course of the play, as he is transformed from an anonymous slave to a named prince. Careful examination of these three cases, however, shows that they are not isolated exceptions, but subtle variations on the patterns that we have already observed.

1. The Persian Queen: The Anonymity of a Historical Figure

We have seen several cases of characters who are in fact unnamed in the text, but to whom scholiasts as well as later critics have assigned names transferred from other traditions. Most modern scholars, however, have now recognized that 'Atossa' in *Persae*, like 'Talthybius' in *Agamemnon* and 'Kopreus' in *Heracleidae*, is never named in the text, and have restored her anonymity in spite of the manuscripts' list of τὰ τοῦ δράματος πρόσωπα.[1] But though the fact is commonly noted, its significance is generally overlooked.

A few scholars have put forward theories to explain the Queen's anonymity in accordance with their general approach to the text. For example, Hall

[1] A significant exception is Garvie (P): "it seems pedantic to insist on always referring to her in this play as 'the Queen'" (*ad* 159).

ad 155, with her focus on the Greek/Barbarian distinction, notes that "Xerxes is not named in his presence either" and suggests that this is part of the portrayal of the formality of Persian tyranny, which would not permit subordinates to use the names of the royal family. To begin with, her observation is misleading; it is true that Xerxes is not directly addressed by name, but the chorus names him in 923 in his presence in no flattering terms, calling him the killer of the Persian youth. Furthermore, Xerxes' name is spoken by all characters throughout the play, and both the Queen and the chorus address Darius by name (e.g. 713, 787); it is only the Queen's name that is never mentioned at all, even by the other members of the royal family.

A second theory is put forward by Brosius (1996:16–17), who is deeply sceptical of Greek historiography as a source for Persian history, especially as regards women; she suggests that Aeschylus' perspective is Hellenic to the extent that the Queen is left anonymous in accordance with the Greek belief that respected women should not be named in public.[2] However, this rule is not easily applicable to the dramatic genre, which presents no other anonymous woman of stature, with the exception of the Daughter of Heracles in *Heracleidae*.[3] In fact, fame is promised to many heroines as partial compensation for their deaths, from the paradigmatic Alcestis to the passionate Antigone, while even in those scenes which play upon the Greek aversion to women appearing in public, such as the cautious arrival of Antigone and the Old Tutor in *Phoenissae*, there is no hesitation in the use of the heroine's name.

It has also been specifically put forward that the anonymity is not significant. Yet it is certainly untrue that, as Harrison suggests, "she was not named in the play because she did not need to be" (1998:73). Like most other anonymous characters[4] she is not referred to when she is not onstage; however, she is addressed so often that she has as great a 'need' for a name as any other protagonist. The number of circumlocutions by which she is addressed is particularly remarkable in contrast with the long lists of Persian (or pseudo-

[2] Cf. Thucydides 2.45.2, Schaps (1977). This would also explain the potential anonymity of Candaules' βασίλεια in *Gyges*(?), *TrGF* fr. adesp. 664, who is certainly unnamed in Herodotus 1.8–12.

[3] Cf. pp. 105–106 above. While it is theoretically possible that the conventions of historically-based tragedy might have differed from those of mythologically-based tragedy, and, being less distantly removed from the contemporary, might have included female anonymity, there are not enough extant historical plays or fragments to put forward such an argument, and no indications of such a distinction in any ancient sources.

[4] Though exceptions include nameless characters with plot-crucial parts, such as the Nurse in *Hippolytus*, the Old Tutor in *Ion*.

Persian) names[5] recited during the parodos (21 ff.), the messenger's speech (302 ff.), and Xerxes' lament (958 ff., 967 ff., 981 ff., 993 ff.).

It is plausible, as Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993:24) argues, that perhaps neither Aeschylus nor the audience of 472 knew her name at all.[6] Of course, this cannot be proven either way; Herodotus certainly discovered it, but this is no guarantee that it was known to the playwright or his audience. It is possible, if unlikely, that Aeschylus' source for the other Persian names in the play, whether another writer or his own imagination, could not furnish a name for the Queen. However, even if the anonymity of the Queen was not chosen by Aeschylus but forced on him by practical considerations, it does not necessarily follow that it is insignificant.

In fact, there is no reason to assume that the poet means for the audience to identify the Queen as the historical Atossa. There is, to begin with, no evidence that the Greeks knew anything at all of her before the publication of Herodotus' *Histories* thirty years later; as Broadhead (xxvi) argues, she must have been "hardly more than a name" to Aeschylus' audience.[7] Without even this much to identify her, it is extremely unlikely that the poet is attempting a representation of the historical Atossa, whatever may be said of the 'accuracy' of the portrayals of Xerxes and Darius.[8] Certainly none of her actions or attributes can be identified with those of the Herodotean character, except the facts that she is the mother of Xerxes and the wife of Darius. Groeneboom is therefore perhaps not far off when he tentatively suggests that "es ist nicht unmöglich, daß sie […] namenlos ist, so daß die Phantasie des Dichters freies Spiel hatte."[9] The causal relationship is not clear, but it is certainly true that the anonymity of the Queen discourages identification with the Herodotean Atossa of power and intrigue.

But does it also indicate any of the dramatic subordination that we have seen in other nameless characters? The extent of her role, her royal stature, and her apparent independence certainly seem to argue that it does not. She delivers the first lines, and has a larger speaking part than

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5 Cf. Garvie (P) xiv–xv, Broadhead Appendix V, 318 ff.

6 To give a modern analogy, how many people could name Saddam Hussein's mother? On the obscurity of Atossa in sources other than Herodotus, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983:22), Brosius (1996) e.g. 48, "in contrast to the prominence given to Atossa in Greek historiography, there is no reference to her in the Old Persian royal inscriptions nor in the surviving and published Fortification texts, although there are plenty of texts that allow the identification of other male and female members of the royal family."

7 Cf. Manton (1982:4).

8 Cf. Harrison (2000:25–30), Groeneboom *ad* 150–152, Vogt (1972) *passim*.

9 Groeneboom *ad* 150–152, n. 113.

either Darius or Xerxes. Her entrances are both visually striking[10]—the first for its outstanding opulence, the second for its contrasting simplicity—and she is onstage longer than any other character. With the exception of the Daughter of Heracles in *Heracleidae*, she is the only adult of noble birth in tragedy who remains unnamed, and her status is never threatened. However, I would argue that in spite of the importance of her role, she is dramatically dependent on her son Xerxes, and that Aeschylus gives her no word, action, or motive that does not direct the audience's attention to him.

This may not be immediately apparent, for in the course of the play she is shown in three different lights, as most obviously demonstrated by the vocatives by which she is addressed in the absence of a personal name. These are given early on in her initial introduction (150–158),[11] and are used with only one exception[12] throughout the play: she is the βασίλεια,[13] the wife of Darius,[14] and the mother of Xerxes.[15] She is therefore always addressed with reference to her position in the court, her husband, or her son. Yet as I will argue, it quickly becomes clear that the last of these is the defining one on which the other two are dependent.

With regards to her political position, this may have been historically true. Herodotus famously speculates that Xerxes would have inherited his father's kingship without Demaratus' intervention, because Atossa held τὸ πᾶν κρατός (7.3.4), and this is sometimes taken to refer back to Xerxes' argument for his superior claim to the throne on the grounds that his mother's father won Persia's freedom (7.2.3). However, there is no other indication of this in Herodotus or any other sources,[16] and certainly Aeschylus never mentions that Cyrus was the Queen's father, though such patronymic references are standard in tragedy. Sancisi-Weerdenburg suggests that it is more likely that Herodotus' speculation is anachronistic, and that "Atossa [became] so important as a *result* of her son's designation to the throne" (1993:25 f.). Brosius similarly argues that as the mother of the current king

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10 Cf. Taplin (1977:70–80, 98–103), Sider (1983).

11 For the announcement and greeting see Taplin (1977:71 ff.) and Hall *ad* 153–154.

12 μῆτερ (215), will be discussed at p. 126 below.

13 βασίλεια δ' ἐμή (152), βαθυζώνων ἄνασσα Περσίδων ὑπερτάτη (155), γῆς ἄνασσα τῆσδε (173), δέσποινα (353), βασίλεια γύναι, πρέσβος Πέρσαις (623).

14 Δαρείου γύναι (156), θεοῦ [...] εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν (157), ἄκοιτιν τὴν ἐμήν (684), τῶν ἐμῶν λέκτρων γεραιὰ ξύννομ', εὐγενὲς γύναι (704).

15 θεῶν ἴσον ὀφθαλμοῖς / φάος [...] μήτηρ βασιλέως (150–151), μῆτερ ἡ Ξέρξου γεραιά (156), θεοῦ [...] μήτηρ (157), γεραιὰ μῆτερ ἡ Ξέρξου φίλη (832).

16 See Brosius (1996:106–109). There is also no explanation of why Atossa and not her sister Artystone held τὸ πᾶν κρατός, if her father was the only source of her power.

she had "a seniority and status perhaps superior even to that of the king's wife" (1996:21–24), and proposes that Aeschylus chose to portray Xerxes' mother as Queen (instead of, for example, his wife Amestris) "primarily because she held the most important position at the Persian court" (1996:16–17).

Aeschylus, of course, is not primarily interested in the reconstruction of Persian royal politics, and as is often the case with women in tragedy, there is no indication in this play that the Queen holds any particular power.[17] Indeed, Brosius warns against equating the title βασίλεια with our modern sense of the word 'Queen.'[18] What is more interesting is that she does not even display any noticeable independence, let alone authority, in the course of the play. In fact, the lack of action throughout the play is in part due to the fact that the stage is largely dominated by an almost entirely passive character. The chorus comes to the palace not to consult with her, but with each other (142–143), and though she clearly has their respect (150–158, 173–175) it is she who asks for (170–172) and accepts (228–230, 521–522) their advice. Whatever her ignorance about Greece may imply about the 'realism' of the play, it certainly does not convey the impression of the Queen's authority. Nor do her interactions with the Messenger or with Darius present her in a position of power; both exchanges are almost wholly centred on the communication of information, and no significant action results from either.

Furthermore, there are several indications that the respect she is accorded by her subjects is due to her son.[19] In the chorus' first description of her as θεῶν ἴσον ὀφθαλμοῖς / φάος [...] μήτηρ βασιλέως (150–151), their elaborate praise is bound up in her motherhood; it is only after they have established this that they call her βασίλεια δ' ἐμή (152). Similarly, the messenger, who like Darius does not address her at all in the first instance,[20] eventually

17 Cf. McClure (2006:81–82).

18 Brosius (1996:18–20): "βασίλεια was simply a Greek term used to identify certain women as members of a royal court or ruling house. The translation 'queen', which would appear to identify one particular royal woman as holding a very specific political status, cannot be justified. [...] In this light Aeschylus' use of βασίλεια as a term of reference for the mother of the Persian king must be regarded as a recognition of her royal status, but not as any evidence that this was a title she employed." Aeschylus uses both ἄνασσα and βασίλεια without any clear distinction, and there are no other 'royal women' to distinguish from the βασίλεια, so that the word 'Queen' is adequate as a title distinct from those which refer explicitly to son or husband; however, her lack of any political or indeed personal power does argue against the use of the term.

19 Cf. McClure (2006:82–84).

20 But see Taplin (1977:86) and Broadhead xlff.

calls her δέσποινα (353), but only after she has specifically mentioned παῖς ἐμός (352) for the first time. Another suggestive vocative is the μῆτερ (215) by which the chorus addresses her after the description of her dream. This is not simply "a reverential mode of address" like the address to πάτερ [...] Δαριάν (663),[21] for the term itself is too resonant in the context of her overriding concern for Xerxes to be dismissed as a mere formality. It is possible that it is an abbreviation of μῆτερ Ξέρξου,[22] but there are no tragic parallels for this. If the chorus is indeed adopting the form of address that their king would use, Aeschylus may in fact be providing a further illustration of what Schenker (1994:284–285) calls the "ideal of a sympathy, if not a unity, between the Persian king and his nation";[23] because she is the mother of their king, she becomes an essentially maternal figure to the Persian chorus as well.

If her personal authority is not particularly emphasized, we might perhaps expect the emphasis to fall on her marriage to Darius, for the presence of the tomb, not to mention the necromancy, bring the old king very much into the present in spite of his death. Yet the chorus makes very few references to her marriage and the Messenger none at all. Apart from the first greeting, and her initial explanation that she has just left τὸ Δαρείου τε κἀμὸν κοινὸν εὐνατήριον (160), which details are necessary in the initial identification of the newly arrived character, the chorus mentions the marriage only in connection with the necromantic scene, as they advise the Queen to ask σὸν πόσιν Δαρεῖον (221) to send some good fortune.

Nor, when he does appear, do the old King and Queen make any especial reference to the marriage, or show any particular attachment to each

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[21] Hall *ad* 215. However, the continuation of her sentence—"implying their utter subordination to her," and her similar note *ad* 663, that "it is not usual for kings in tragedy, even dead ones, to be addressed as 'father' by coevals; it implies a distinctly inegalitarian relationship"—is characteristic of her insistence on 'otherness.' It is just possible that πάτερ is comparable to the English 'Sire'; however, "subordination" and an "inegalitarian relationship" would be much more clearly expressed by terms such as δέσποινα or ἄναξ. By contrast, Broadhead *ad* 173 claims that the vocative μῆτερ is "exactly suited to the Chorus' advisory and consolatory role"; yet παῖ would be much more appropriate, if that were the effect intended.

[22] As Garvie (P) suggests ad loc. Cf. Schenker (1994:288), who argues that the change from the respectful γῆς ἄνασσα τῆσδε (173) before the relation of her dream, to the simple μῆτερ afterwards, is a reflection of the chorus' realization (and perhaps disapproval) of her particular concern. The chorus' address to μῆτερ Ἰοκάστη at *Phoen.* 444 is the only other instance of a chorus using the vocative μῆτερ to an onstage character. The context makes it clear that the Phoenician women are using it literally to describe Jocasta's relationship to her sons; it is her ἔργον, as their mother, to reconcile them.

[23] Cf. the mingling of 'we' and 'he' in the stasimon in praise of Darius (853 ff.). See also Thalmann (1980 *passim*).

other.[24] The summoned spirit of Darius turns first to the chorus, and though he sees ἄκοιτιν τὴν ἐμήν (684) nearby, he does not address her until the elders have twice failed to speak.[25] When he does turn to his wife, his greeting is highly formal: τῶν ἐμῶν λέκτρων γεραιὰ ξύννομ', εὐγενὲς γύναι (704). The stichomythia that ensues is almost entirely impersonal; the story of Xerxes' defeat is relayed and lamented without any particular attention being drawn to either speaker or hearer.

However, when Darius delivers his *rhesis* lamenting Xerxes' folly, the Queen speaks not to console her husband, but to defend her son. She claims that he was led astray by κακοῖς [...] ἀνδράσιν (753 ff.) who taunted him with his failure to match his father's accomplishments, thereby attempting to recast Xerxes' hybris as, at best, a desire to follow his father's example and prove his manhood or, at worst, impressionability.[26] Darius is unmoved and completes his censure of the young king, but the mother's attempt to excuse her son in her last speech to his father indicates her priorities to the audience.

Darius' closing speech confirms this; after his exchange with the chorus, he addresses the Queen one last time not as his wife, but as γεραιὰ μῆτερ ἡ Ξέρξου φίλη (832). He instructs her to fetch new robes for her son and to welcome him, emphasizing that she is the one person whom Xerxes will be willing to see (838). This is paralleled by the Queen's earlier references to Darius; when she relates her premonition of her son's downfall (197–198), she describes Darius as Xerxes' father, not her own husband, and again, when she is bringing libations to the tomb, she explains that she means to propitiate παιδὸς πατρί (609). The interactions between the Queen and Darius are therefore defined almost entirely by their relationships with Xerxes.

Indeed, it may also be the case that it is only through her role as Xerxes' mother that the Queen is defined in this play as Darius' wife, depending on

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24 This may have been a striking contrast to the Homeric exchanges in which the living terafully attempt to embrace the shades of the dead.

25 Though it is true, as Taplin points out (1977:86), that it is not uncommon for a newly arrived character to speak first to the chorus and also, as Broadhead xliif and Garvie (P) 273 note, that it was the song of the chorus and not the Queen's libations that had raised him (686–688), the failure of the chorus to respond calls attention to the slight incongruity of the address.

26 Ironically, this is the passage that Broadhead xviii cites as an example of her willingness to accept her son's flaws (753 ff.). Cf. McClure's unconvincing claim that the Queen criticizes her son at 476–477 and in the use of his proper name in this passage and elsewhere (2006:89–90).

what we can assume about Aeschylus' knowledge about the Persian royal family. Eastern polygamy was assumed by the Greeks as early as Homer, and Herodotus certainly believed that Darius, like other Persian kings, had several wives and that Atossa shared his bed ἐν περιτροπῇ with others, including her sister Artystone.[27] The Persian harem, either onstage as a chorus or even just mentioned in passing, would have contributed a great deal to the images of 'Asia unmanned' and the 'Oriental other' of which so much has been made.[28] Yet there is no suggestion of anything other than a monogamous, if not affectionate, relationship between Darius and the Queen. Given the emphasis placed on the son in the interactions between husband and wife, we can safely say that Xerxes' mother is chosen from the other possible candidates to be 'Darius' wife' in this play precisely because she is Xerxes' mother; her relationship with her husband depends on her relationship with her son.

The Queen's defining role, then, is as the μήτηρ βασιλέως, from the ominous dream of her first entry to her final exit to fetch new clothes for her son, and it is certainly the aspect of her portrayal that has been most remarked upon.[29] For example, Schenker (1994) summarizes her dedicated concern for Xerxes, and contrasts it with the chorus' broader anxiety for the Persian people. He notes (1994:287–288) her repeated references to παῖς ἐμός (177, 189, 197, 211, 227, 233, 352, 473, 476, and 529) at the expense of references to his kingship, her first enquiries of the Messenger (296–298, 300–301), her attempt to defend him to Darius (752–758), the comfort she takes in Xerxes' prosperity regardless of the turn of events (213–214), and her "obsession with his clothes" both in her dream (199) and in her anticipation of his return (845–851). Although she "is not entirely blind to the more universal effects of the Persian losses" (Schenker 1994:285), her primary concern is for Xerxes,[30]

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[27] Hdt. 3.69.6, and 7.69.2; scholiast on *Il.* 24.495–497, cf. Hall (1989:42–43, 135, 201), and Brosius (1996), especially 35–37.

[28] E.g. Hall (1993), Harrison (2000) and their bibliographies. To present such an un-Greek phenomenon might have been surprising, but probably would not have seemed more intolerable than Orestes' matricide, or more alien than the Persian custom of prostration before the royal family. Cf. Hall *ad* 152 and Sider (1983). Indeed, the nearest Greek equivalent to polygamy, the keeping of a concubine in addition to a wife, appears centrally in *Trachiniae* and *Andromache*, and peripherally in *Agamemnon*, always leading to disastrous consequences. Cf. Foley (2001:87–105).

[29] E.g. Broadhead xxvi, Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983:24), Schenker (1994 *passim*), McClure (2006 *passim*, with additional bibliography at 72–73), and Garvie (P), e.g. xxxiv, *ad* 168–169, 296–299, 350–352.

[30] Cf. Herodotus' story (8.99) that when the Persians hear the news of the defeat, they lament οὐκ οὕτω δὲ περὶ τῶν νεῶν ἀχθόμενοι ταῦτα οἱ Πέρσαι [...] ὡς περὶ αὐτῷ Ξέρξῃ δειμαίνοντες.

and she keeps her son and his tragedy in the minds of the audience, as distinct from the general tragedy of their people.

It is to strengthen this, I would argue, that the Queen is never named. Her exclusivity of focus is certainly comparable to the devotion shown by other anonymous characters towards the heroes that they serve, and, like theirs, serves to draw attention away from the Queen herself and to focus it instead on Xerxes. Like anonymous characters of lesser stature and briefer roles she lacks independent personal motives; she is literally and dramatically focused on her son. She does not, however, contribute particularly to the depiction of Xerxes, for not even he is given any significant characterization in this play; rather, her concern for him is a crucial part of the preparation for his climactic entry, for she keeps the absent king continually in the audience's mind, which is particularly important since the structure of the play prevents him from being present until the very end.

This is the most persuasive explanation for her absence during the final scene.[31] If her main dramatic purpose were to represent Persia's grief or Oriental luxury or even the concept of motherhood, we would expect to see her meet with the defeated Xerxes to reproach or comfort; but if her role is to prepare for her son's entry, there is no need for them to interact. Dworacki (1978:104) is reluctant to have her leave "almost as a messenger who leaves the stage having delivered his last words," but this, I would argue, is just what she does: like such a messenger, she has played her part. When Xerxes himself appears,[32] there is no further need for his mother's representation, and in spite of her prominence in the majority of the play, it is unlikely that the audience would have watched the final scene wondering what had happened to the Queen.

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[31] Cf. Garvie (P) 338, McClure (2006:71) and Schenker (1994:290). I agree with Wilamowitz (1914:46) and many subsequent scholars, who argue that the Queen as comforter would have undermined the despair of the final scene: see especially Dworacki (1978:101 f.) and Broadhead xxxix n. 1, and Chodkowski (1993) on the impossibility of replacing his clothing.

The absence of the Queen is the main difficulty with McClure's otherwise attractive suggestion that a significant parallel is drawn between her and Thetis (2006:79, 94–96), heightening the contrast between Achilles' honourable death and Xerxes' disgraceful survival. It is not true that "the *Persae* allows its hero to return home to his mother"; he returns not to her, but to the lamentations of the chorus, and there is no mention or reminder of her in the final scene. Cf. Garvie (P) 323: "[Aeschylus does not] give his audience the slightest encouragement to suppose that mother and son will meet after the end of the play."

[32] See Mitsis (1988:109–118) for readings of this scene.

2. Cilissa: Anonymously Named

The nurse in *Choephoroi* is in many ways a 'typical' anonymous character. Though she is one of the most memorably and humbly realistic 'personalities' of tragedy, with her memories of midnight feedings and diaper changes, she has no dramatic independence and is focused entirely on Orestes. She is not, however, anonymous.

Cilissa is famously the only named character of servile status. The only other named characters who are not noble[33] are the heralds Lichas and Talthybius,[34] both of whom are well established in the mythological tradition under these names. Cilissa, however, clearly is not; the name is simply derived from her place of origin. It is plausible that the audience would not even have considered 'Cilissa' to be a personal name; certainly it can have no mythological resonance.[35] What then is its purpose?

Orestes' Nurse is one of the very few tragic characters of low social status who also exists, and is named, in the broader mythological tradition. Pindar calls her 'Arsinoë' (*Py.* 11.17 ff.), and scholiasts tell us that both Stesichorus and Pherecydes called her 'Laodameia.'[36] The aristocratic register of these names is suggestive; though it cannot be proven, it is very plausible that these incarnations of the Nurse belong to the class of former nobles who have been enslaved, comparable to Eurycleia in the *Odyssey*. The contrast with Cilissa's slave-name is striking, and is paralleled by the contrast in their functions; while Arsinoë and, as far as we can tell, Laodameia,[37] are responsible for the rescue of Orestes, Aeschylus' version of the Nurse is entirely unconnected with any such active role (and indeed, her charge is not even rescued from his mother but sent away by her).

The slave-name Cilissa, I suggest, is an Aeschylean invention intended to distinguish his Nurse from her noble and active counterparts[38] without

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33 In tragedy, unlike in Homer, there is no indication that heralds are of noble rank.

34 Cf. p. 25 above.

35 However, it is very possible, though presently beyond proof, that Aeschylus' audience would have had a particular view of slaves from Cilicia which would colour their perception of Orestes' Nurse. See Robertson (2008:85–86) and Fraser (2000) for discussions of the commonness and cultural significance of slave names based on place of origin.

36 The scholia on this play at 733 give the names used by Pindar and Stesichorus; a scholiast on Pindar (P XI 25b = *FGrH* 3 F134) tells us that Pindar's naming is idiosyncratic, and records Pherecydes' 'Laodameia.'

37 Cf. Jebb's *Electra*, xx.

38 And perhaps also to heighten the contrast between her and Clytaemestra?

imbuing her with a significant individuality of her own. The name immediately conveys to an ancient audience that she is not an enslaved noble who defied her mistress to rescue her master, but a passive and unassuming slave who continues to obey the established power in spite of her personal loyalties. The fact that the chorus addresses her by name contributes to the realism and domesticity of the exchange, and though tragedy is rarely interested in the community of slaves, in this play it helps to suggest the unpopularity of the current masters.[39] At the same time, the name itself is so impersonal that it maintains the focus on her role rather than her individuality.

This role is one we have seen played by most nameless characters; she unobtrusively directs the audience to a particular view of Orestes and Clytaemestra and their relationship. Her contribution to the plot is minimal; her ostensible function—informing Aegisthus of the news and bringing him to the house—is superfluous, for such logistical considerations are often suppressed, as in Sophocles' telling of the same events. Of rather more interest is the chorus' success in persuading her to alter the message entrusted to her and omit any mention of a bodyguard.[40] It is, as often noted, rare for a servant to disobey an order in this way; however, as she does so at the instigation of the chorus, it is their behaviour rather than hers that is truly exceptional.

But the exchange between Cilissa and the chorus is of little interest as compared to the Nurse's first monologue. This memorable speech fulfils three important dramatic functions, all focused on the portrayal of Orestes. Firstly, Cilissa performs the usual function of a Nurse in depicting Orestes as a helpless infant.[41] In particular, by replacing the mental image of the snake from Clytaemestra's dream with the memory of a very real baby, she encourages the sympathy of the audience at this critical moment.[42] Secondly, she is "someone who does not see Orestes principally as a potential avenger, but

39 Cf. Golden (1990:152–153).

40 This is the focus of Karydas' interpretation (1998:64–76). Garvie (C) *ad* 730–782 points out two important effects of the mention of the bodyguard; firstly, "to explain and to draw attention to Aegisthus' appearance at 838 without the bodyguard which would be normal for a man in his position," and secondly, "Aeschylus suggests that the weak Aegisthus *requires* such protection, as at the end of *Ag*." It is also worth noting that although this ploy is not Orestes' invention, the deceptive actions of his allies furthers his characterization as a crafty character rather than a straightforward martial hero like his father.

41 Cf. p. 15 above.

42 Cf. Rose (1982:50). Contrast Garvie (C) *ad* 730–782 who considers this to be "a grim contrast for the audience as we remember that the baby has grown into his mother's murderer."

loves him for himself,"[43] unlike the chorus, Electra and even Pylades. This helps to dissuade the audience from considering him a 'flat' character or passive tool of Apollo.

But Cilissa's most important function is to influence the perception of Clytaemestra's relationship to Orestes. This is crucial, as there is some uncertainty concerning the degree of sincerity in Clytaemestra's reaction, at 691–699, to the news of Orestes' death. The text of the speech does not betray any obvious irony; in fact, this speech has been attributed to Electra in several editions as far back as the Aldine and Turnebus.[44] Without textual indications, the interpretation of Clytaemestra's mourning is necessarily subjective. Cilissa's description of her reaction (737 ff.) as hypocritical, however, provides us with evidence of the Queen's insincerity.[45] Her speech therefore connects Clytaemestra with the deceptive heroine of *Agamemnon*, linking her with Aegisthus' feigned grief at 841 ff. and foreshadowing her cold and decisive reaction to the news of Orestes' arrival (889).[46]

Furthermore, Aeschylus invites the comparison of the two reactions not only by their virtual juxtaposition, but also, as Garvie points out *ad* 730–782, through the use of verbal echoes at 734–735, 749, 750, 751–753, 755, and 776. Both women believe the report of Orestes' death,[47] but Clytaemestra's response, while convincing enough in its context, appears both brief and formal by contrast with Cilissa's extended and very personal lamentation. The difference raises the issue of what fundamentally constitutes motherhood and, as Conacher suggests, it "prepares us, perhaps, for the minimizing of the maternal relationship by Apollo and Orestes in *Eumenides*" (1986:120).

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43 Garvie (C) *ad* 730–782. I would not, however, agree with Petrounias' statement that the Watchman of *Agamemnon* and the Nurse of *Choephoroi* are the only characters in the *Oresteia* "die in ganz einfacher Weise jemanden lieben und, obwohl sie die Lage nicht gutheissen, keinem Hassgefühl Ausdruck geben" (1976:211); they are not in a position to be able to openly express any "Hassgefühl Ausdruck," but certainly Cilissa's description of her mistress (737 ff.) suggests that she does not simply "disapprove of the situation," and describing Aegisthus as λυμαντήριον (764) clearly demonstrates her antipathy.

44 For a modern defence of this attribution see McDonald (1960).

45 Cf. Conacher (1986:120). Margon (1983) dismisses her report as inaccurate, if not insincere; the Nurse is highly partial, does not know the Queen's mind, and though her opinion helps to demonstrate her sincerity it does not necessarily disprove Clytaemestra's. This interpretation overemphasizes the importance of Cilissa as a character, and also casts doubt on the testimony of a sympathetic character without any evidence of her being in error. Cf. van Erp Taalman Kip (1996) on truth in tragedy.

46 Cf. pp. 10–11 above.

47 Might this have suggested to Sophocles the effectiveness of an extensive deception of Electra as well as Clytaemestra and Aegisthus?

More immediately, it is crucial to our sympathy for Orestes in this play and during the matricide that his birth mother is shown to be, as Electra has declared (190 f.), not truly a mother. The affection of the nurse is bound up in the menial tasks that she performed for him (e.g. φίλον δ' Ὀρέστην, τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς τριβήν, 749). Clytaemestra, on the other hand, has no such fond memories; his birth and feeding are paired for her only with fear, in the dream of the snake. This helps to undermine Clytaemestra's pleading arguments in her last exchange with Orestes; though she did nurse him—and this plea at 896–898 evidently strikes a chord in Orestes—it is the only maternal service she performed for him, and we are likely to question her claim that she raised him (908).[48] The matricide is therefore cast as a betrayal of biological rather than emotional ties,[49] so that "although at the end of the scene the horror is real enough, our sympathy is firmly with Orestes" (Garvie (C) *ad* 730–782).

3. The Slave of Loxias in *Ion*: Naming an Anonymous Character

The initial anonymity of the eponymous hero of *Ion* is very different from the complete anonymity of the characters we have considered so far; accordingly, it gives unique insights into the tragic uses of namelessness and naming. Because of the prominence of revelation and recognition of identity in this play, there is constant tension and irony in the various forms of address used by the characters, who lack the insight given to the audience in the prologue.[50] This is not uncommon in tragedy. However, the protagonist of *Ion* does not merely fail to recognize a φίλος, like his own mother in this play, or have a mistaken conception of his own parentage, like Sophocles' Oedipus in *OT*; to all intents and purposes, he does not even have a concept of himself as an independent character, but identifies himself only as Apollo's slave. When he tells Creousa, οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν · Λοξίου κεκλήμεθα

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[48] It is true, as Margon (1983:297 n. 9) points out, that a ruling family would naturally have a nurse to take care of the baby's daily needs; however, the extensive details and especially the expression of love certainly draw attention to the question of what it means to be a mother.

[49] This is not to say that biological ties are not important, whatever Apollo may claim (*Eum.* 658–661). Cf. Goheen (1955:132–133). Orestes himself acknowledges this both in his hesitation to kill her and in his reaction afterwards; however, the lack of emotional ties makes the matricide bearable for the audience.

[50] For a partial list of examples, see Lee *ad* 238.

(311), it is not simply ironic; it demonstrates not only their mutual ignorance of their relationship, but also the utter self-effacement of the slave. His naming plays a significant role in his acceptance of his transformation from a devoted slave to a self-aware, autonomous prince, and while most accounts of this transformation suggest a gradual development or a general 'rebirth' that occurs over the second half of the play,[51] I suggest that the naming at 661 is a distinct pivotal point.

In the course of the lengthy prologue, Hermes, himself the δαιμόνων λάτρι[ς] (4),[52] uses 14 different personal names a total of 29 times before he gives Ion's.[53] This is again nothing unusual in itself; Jocasta's genealogical catalogue in the prologue of *Phoenissae*, for example, contains still more. What is striking in Hermes' speech is the contrast between the repetition of these names and the various circumlocutions that he must use in referring to the anonymous protagonist.[54] It is not until the end of the prologue that Hermes finally names Ion, linking the first use of his name with the concept of his future fame: Ἴωνα δ' αὐτόν, κτίστορ' Ἀσιάδος χθονός, /ὄνομα κεκλῆσθαι θήσεται καθ' Ἑλλάδα (74–75).[55] He reiterates this point a few lines later, this time implying that his name will be known among the gods as well as men (80–81). In spite of the present tense of ὀνομάζω, it is important to note the futurity of both θήσεται and μέλλει; although this is a clear anticipation of the naming scene (cf. the use of ὀνομάζω at 661), the Slave has not yet been named. The name that will be his has already been determined and is part of the privileged knowledge granted to the audience both by Hermes' divine insight and by the mythological tradition, but within the human world of the play it is not yet known.[56] Though the spectators are aware that it will be his name, it is not yet his, just as he is not yet the prince who will become the namesake of the Ionian people. The Slave

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[51] E.g. Hanson (1975), Zeitlin (1989), Loraux (1993:186–187), Gibert (1995:189–201), Lee (1996:103–104). Compare Wolff (1965:171–172).

[52] Cf. Loraux (1993:187 n. 11).

[53] See Cole (1997:96) for the argument that Euripides invents Ion's parentage in this play and that Hermes' naming introduces the audience to this innovation. The frequent mention of Creousa's name (11, 18, 57, 62, 65, 72) is noted by Owen xiii, Wilamowitz (1) and Hanson (1975:29).

[54] παῖς (16, 35, 39, 41, 43, 48, 51, 70, 73, 77), βρέφος (16, 31), τέκνον (27), νεανίας (57), γόνον (78). Though παῖς is appropriate to his age, it is also suggestive of his status as a slave.

[55] On the potential significance of the name itself see e.g. Zacharia (2003:125 and n. 102).

[56] Cf. Zacharia (2003:127–128). See Lee (1996:86–87) for the emphasis on "the god's panoramic perspective." There may be Homeric parallels; see Clay (1972) for a discussion of distinction between human and divine "naming and knowing."

himself is unaware of his future name and prosperity, and behaves only as the servant of Apollo.[57]

He takes the stage alone, and introduces himself to us in the course of a long monody which is full of the satisfaction that he finds in his menial tasks (102 ff.).[58] His consciousness of his servitude surfaces throughout his song in the words πόνος (102, 128, 132, 135), μόχθος (103, 144, 181), θεραπεύω (111, 183), λατρεύω (123, 130, 152), and δοῦλος (132, 182); but these terms are never cast in the negative light that generally surrounds them.[59] Instead, the Slave's devotion to Phoebus, whose name occurs thirteen times, is explicitly enhanced by his ignorance of other ties (109–111, 136–140, 182–183) and transforms his servitude to something much more positive throughout the song, but especially in the antistrophe (128–140). He describes his labour as καλός (128), κλεινός (131), and εὔφαμος (134); each of three three-line statements begins with an unusual description of πόνος explicitly linked to Apollo (Φοῖβε (129), θεοῖσιν [...] οὐ θνατοῖς ἀλλ' ἀθανάτοις (132–133) and Φοῖβός μοι γενέτωρ πατήρ (136) respectively).[60] The effect is one not of personal pleasure, but rather a sense of worthwhile duty; the audience does not forget that he is first and foremost a slave, and he concludes his song with this balanced concept of willing service of the divine: οἷς δ' ἔγκειμαι μόχθοις / Φοίβῳ δουλεύσω κοὐ λήξω / τοὺς βόσκοντας θεραπεύων (181–183).

This is not a "provisional life" as Forehand (1979:178) suggests. Lee (1996:88) points out the emphasis on the Slave's "complete immersion in the present"; allusions to the past (102) and the future (181–182) only emphasize the continuity of his current life. The one reference in the monody to even the potential of change is 153, which is both vague and brief; yet while it does not demonstrate any knowledge of or active desire for a different life, it should not be dismissed entirely as it prepares at least the possibility of an alternative.

The arrival of the chorus interrupts the Slave's solitude and shows us his first interactions with other characters. His subordinate status is stressed by the chorus, itself composed of servant-slaves, in their abrupt call for his attention (219).[61] This is subtly reinforced by his exclusion from their

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57 Cf. e.g. Yunis (1988:122–123), Hamilton (1985:57–58, especially note 16) for discussion of the apparent incongruity between his 'priest' role (54–55) and his menial tasks as a temple slave.

58 Cf. Yunis (1988:123–124), Burnett (1971:107).

59 Contra Walsh (1978:301).

60 Cf. Synodinou (1977:91).

61 σέ τοι seems in fact to be used mostly by rulers addressing insubordinates: in Sophocles, Agamemnon's address to Teucer at *Aj*. 1228, Aegisthus' to Electra at *El*. 1445, and Creon's to

song; the antistrophic correspondence of 219 ff. to 205 ff., which leaves his anapaestic responses metrically anomalous, is a unique instance within a strophic structure in surviving tragedy.[62] The Slave's part in the exchange is therefore strictly limited; the chorus treats him only as a useful source of information by virtue of his association with the temple and the god, and his responses are strictly impersonal.

Creousa, on the other hand, is very much concerned with the Slave as an individual. The heavily ironic exchange that follows has been variously interpreted, with particular emphasis on the boy's acute awareness of status (237, 262, 293) and on his mixed reaction to the story of Apollo and Creousa's 'friend' (339, 341, 355, 369–380, 429–451),[63] both of which add complexity to his initial presentation. Equally significant are the indications given here of the Slave's understanding of identity. When, at 258, he asks the woman, τίς δ' εἶ; he clarifies it with three questions—"From which land have you come? Who is your father?[64] By what name should I call you?"—which she answers unambiguously. Yet when Creousa in turn[65] asks, σὺ δ' εἶ τίς; (308), he answers simply: τοῦ θεοῦ καλοῦμαι δοῦλος, εἰμί τ[ε]. The question whether he has been dedicated or sold does not seem to trouble him (310);[66] he replies that he knows only one thing: Λοξίου κεκλήμεθα.

Yet further dialogue fills out his sense of his own identity, already suggested in his monody: the god is his father (136 ff.), the Pythia is his mother (321), the whole temple is his home (315), and Λοξίου, an ironic patronymic, is what he is called if not quite a name (311). Although Creousa twice expresses pity (312, 320) both lines are linked to her private grief and the Slave himself does not express any regret or resentment. Though the audience may think, with Zeitlin (1989:145), "here is a character in urgent need of all the basic accoutrements of an identity (any identity)—a mother, a father, a name, and a home of his own—for he has none of these in the world he inhabits at Delphi," there is no indication that the Slave is

Antigone at *Ant.* 441; also Euripides' *Hel.* 546, Menelaus' address to the woman who indeed turns out to be Helen, but whom he does not recognize at first. Compare Xuthus' single word to the boy (cf. Lee *ad* 417).

62 Cf. Dale (1968:50–51).

63 On status e.g. Walsh (1979:301), Forehand (1979:175), Hanson (1975:30); on Apollo e.g. Yunis (1988:127–133), Gibert (1995), Zacharis (2003:71–72), Hanson (1975:34).

64 See Kovacs (1984:240) for a linguistic defence of Dindorf's πατρός at 258, now less popular than it was (cf. Diggle (1981:98), Lee ad loc.).

65 Lee (1996:89–90) points out the parallels in these "interrogations" and their implications of "affinity."

66 Cf. Yunis (1988:124).

dissatisfied with the substitutions provided for him. It is, however, worth remarking that he has not looked for his parents only for practical reasons (329). Like his acknowledgement of possible change in his fortune and his contemplation of Apollo's error, this suggests his interest in finding his 'true' family and leaves the door open for the events of the rest of the play.[67]

The first episode therefore presents the Slave as a devoted, sympathetic, and contented boy. However, alternatives have been raised to three closely related cornerstones of his identity: his servitude to Apollo, the absolute righteousness of the gods, and his ignorance of his own parentage. The last of these becomes the focus of the second episode when Xuthus recounts the oracle's revelation at 530. Within ten lines the Slave has more or less accepted his new father, and with this acceptance the first cornerstone begins to give way too. At 556, he gives the first conventionally negative impression of his servitude—ἐκπεφεύγαμεν τὸ δοῦλον—while at 561 he applies to Xuthus the title 'father' that he has until now used for Apollo.

But there is resistance too.[68] When at 576 ff. Xuthus explains the corollary of the oracle, turning from the past to the future, the Slave learns that he will become the heir to Athens. Yet though this is ἀγαθᾷ μοίρᾳ (153)[69] as he had hoped, he is reluctant for a range of reasons, from the consideration of his position as an outsider and a bastard (589 ff.)—including his sudden fear of being "called nobody" (594)[70]—to his concerns for and about Creousa (607 ff.) and the comparative advantages of his life at the temple (621 ff.). The climax of his argument, as Yunis (1988:126–127) argues, is the dependence of his personal justness on his relationship with Apollo (642–644). His decision, after careful reflection, is to remain where he is; in spite of his initial reaction and apparent relief at his freedom, he is not ready to give up his slavery for wealth, title, or power.

Yet he soon agrees to go (668), and it is not immediately obvious why.[71] Xuthus' reply (650–665) does not directly respond to any of these objections; the only concern he shares is the Slave's pity for (but not fear of) Creousa

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67 Cf. Hoffer (1996:376).

68 Cf. Lee (1996:94–95) who interprets this as a "negative expression of Ion's attachment to Delphi and the present."

69 As Burnett points out (1971:104 f.), this is a reversal of the usual "overturn from bad to good" of semi-divine children, for "he will move instead only from an unworldly form of happiness to another, worldly, one."

70 Although the line as transmitted is metrically problematic, the sense is clear and coherent with the rest of the speech (cf. Kovacs 1979:117 and 119), following Seidler's emendation.

71 Surprisingly, neither Gibert (1995) nor Knox (1966) addresses this crucial "change of mind."

(656–660), for which he has a glib solution.[72] That the boy does not imitate Xuthus' ignoring of his objections is clear from 669–675, nor is there anything to suggest that he is caught up in his newfound father's brusque enthusiasm. Burnett (1971:108) suggests: "It is the boy's natural gentleness that allows the action to go on, for it makes him obedient to his new-found father in spite of his doubts about Athens." This, however, does not account for his initial extended objections, or for the reiteration of his concern about his status at Athens. I suggest instead that the acceptance of his transformation from servant of the god to future ruler of Athens is brought about by the one element newly introduced in Xuthus' reply: his naming.

This may seem an overstatement of the case; after all, as we have seen, Apollo has already chosen the name and Hermes has twice pronounced it in the prologue.[73] However, as Mueller (2010:369–370) points out, naming is an "exercise of authority,"[74] and Xuthus' use of the name determined by Apollo and revealed by Hermes adds divine weight to his claim. Although his name is used only very rarely in the remainder of the play,[75] Ion now accepts Xuthus' authority and yields to his wishes. His former contentment in the present is now replaced by his concern for the future (667–675), and his interest in his mother's identity is no longer emotional (e.g. 563–565) but political. Above all, he changes his focus from Delphi to Athens.[76] The Slave is replaced by Ion, a freeman and a prince.

It is crucial that Ion is kept offstage for the next two scenes, so that he is described largely by two hostile speakers: the Old Tutor (e.g. 978, 1043–1046) and the Messenger (1122 ff.). Of particular interest are the chorus' report of the naming (800–802) and the Messenger's complete avoidance of Ion's name. In the first passage, the Old Tutor asks what the boy's name is and then whether he has been named at all. These are the last in a series of questions, and the chorus connects their emphatic reply—the first use of

[72] Cf. Loraux (1993:206–207). See also Lee (1996:93–94) on the contrast between Ion and Xuthus throughout this episode.

[73] Cf. Zacharia (2003:126–128), who asks "Just who first names Ion?"

[74] However, her interpretation of this passage depends on a misrepresentation of the sequence of events, ("a comic misunderstanding undermines the effectiveness of Xouthos' naming,") and she glosses over Apollo's role in the naming. Cf. Loraux (1993:188–189), who also plays down the significance of this scene.

[75] By the chorus (802), in answer to a direct question; by Athena (1588), but only in reference to the people who will be named for him; and possibly (if the lines are to be kept) by the Old Tutor (831).

[76] Cf. Zacharia (2003:11–43) for a sensitive treatment of the interaction between the two communities throughout the play.

Ion's name since the naming—with the description of the sacrificial feast as the climax of Xuthus' betrayal. The Messenger, on the other hand, never uses the name. Instead, he resorts to the same kind of circumlocutions that we have heard in the prologue;[77] particularly resonant is his use of Λοξίου νεανίας (1218) which recalls the boy's self-identification at 311. This is a reflection of the Messenger's allegiance to his mistress (1111, 1186, 1223, 1226); he demonstrates his refusal to accept Ion's 'promotion' by denying him his name.[78] Throughout his speech, the Messenger describes Ion as a temple-slave, placing great emphasis on the boy's observance of the rites (1132 ff.) and on the fact that it is his upbringing and piety that prevent him from drinking the poisoned wine (1190).[79]

Yet Ion is no longer the Slave, and the violence of the description of his verbal (1210–1212) and physical (1213) reactions to the revelation of the plot contrasts sharply with all we have seen of him. The extent of the change is further demonstrated in the exodos.[80] The imperatives and indignation of his opening speech, the viciousness of his threats even in his exchange with the Pythia (1266–1268, 1327–1328, 1333–1334), and the growing impiety of his language (e.g. 1275–1276(?),[81] 1312–1319, 1537–1538) all draw a sharp distinction between Ion and the Slave. There is no trace of his former hesitation about going to Athens, and he confidently claims a share in the city (e.g. 1296–1304); correspondingly, for the first time he describes his anonymous (1372) life at Delphi with sorrow (1372–1377, 1457). As Creousa says (1287, 1289) and the Pythia later confirms (1343–1345), he is at least in one sense no longer Λοξίου.[82]

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77 Cf. Owen *ad* 1210. It is also worth noting that Creousa never uses the name; after the recognition she calls him τέκνον (1399, 1411, 1431, 1439, 1458, 1470, 1497, 1530, 1539, 1616) and once παῖς (1509). Cf. Loraux (1993:188).

78 Contra de Jong (1991:102), who argues that the use of circumlocutions "stresses the fact that Ion is Xuthus' new son."

79 Compare the Delphians' condemnation of Creousa for trying to kill τὸν ἱερόν—not 'Ion' (1224).

80 This is particularly true if he is carrying a sword as implied at 1258 and perhaps 1309, in striking contrast to the broom, bow and pitcher of his first appearance.

81 The authenticity of 1275 is disputed; see e.g. Kovacs (2003:20–22), Mastronarde (1979:110–112), Diggle (1974:28–30), Lee ad loc. The staging of 1312–1319 is also unclear; the exclamation φεῦ may indeed imply that Ion "ceases to struggle with himself" (e.g. Yunis (1988:134 n. 63)), but the Pythia's ἐπίσχες at 1320 strongly suggests that she interrupts an action; see Lee ad loc. for parallels (though he suggests that Ion is turning to leave the stage).

82 The term is repeated one last time at 1608, where Ion at last realizes the sense in which he is Apollo's.

It is tempting to overstate the change, to idealize the slave and condemn the prince;[83] yet Ion is not a villain. Though his piety is tested, his doubts do not lead to impious action.[84] Rather, he takes on the responsibilities and concerns as well as the name of a freeman and a prince, and develops his own independent perspective. Released from servitude and given a family and a throne, he experiences a rise in self-awareness and a corresponding decrease of his devotion which are in effect the restoration of a balance for which his naming acts as a catalyst. Our final picture of him is therefore not incompatible with our first impression, for the temple-slave has been integrated into the prince rather than replaced by him. The future glory of his name is assured (1587–1588), and he is 'worthy' of both Athena and Athens (1617–1618).

83 E.g. Hanson (1975).
84 Cf. Yunis (1988:133–134), Gibert (1995:193–197).

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS

We have now examined the full range of anonymous characters in tragedy in all their tremendous variety. Regardless of the length of their appearance, the realism of their portrayal, or their impact on the plot, all of them are carefully designed to contribute to the characterization of a particular traditional hero. This use of anonymous characters is not only subtle and effective; it is also unique in Greek literature. Anonymity is a technique used in most genres; however, a brief comparison with equivalent figures in epic, comedy and later tragedy[1] will demonstrate the distinctiveness of the use of anonymous characters by the Greek tragedians.

1. Epic: Homer and Hesiod

> οὐ μὲν γάρ τις πάμπαν ἀνώνυμός ἐστ' ἀνθρώπων,
> οὐ κακὸς οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλός, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.
>
> *Od.* 8.552–553

This observation of Alcinous' applies particularly to epic. Names and naming are at the heart of the genre; they are a defining feature of virtually every character, while catalogues of names and genealogies are prevalent throughout.[2] The presence of a narrator allows the natural introduction of

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[1] Many genres and authors invite comparison (e.g. the Bible, mythico-historical lyric, Shakespeare), but I have chosen these because they provide the most interesting contrasts. Epic, like tragedy, draws its characters and plotlines from inherited tradition, but it is both narrative and archaic. Comedy is dramatic, but invents its plots and all characters. Seneca and the 17th-century French tragedians adapted the plots and characters of Greek models to suit their own dramatic purposes. Note that I make no attempt at an extended discussion of the use of anonymity in these genres, particularly for later tragedy; I intend only to draw a contrast with Greek tragedy, to indicate what has been done, and perhaps to suggest directions for future investigation.

[2] Scholarship has focused almost exclusively on Homer. For general overviews see Higbie (1995) and, more briefly, Louden (1995); for focus on Odysseus' assumed anonymity e.g. Austin (1972), Fenik (1974:7–55), Webber (1989), Peradotto (1990) esp. chapters 4–6, van

names to the audience at the first appearance of a character, and many epic figures are defined only by their names in their very brief appearances in the narrative. The *Iliad* and the *Theogony* in particular focus on gods and heroes, and place striking emphasis on their names and lineages, while names and naming in the *Odyssey* (particularly with respect to Odysseus himself) are central to its exploration of disguise and identity. *Works and Days*, on the other hand, has very few particularized characters who might be named. Anonymous figures in Homer and Hesiod are therefore few and far between; however, their very rarity is striking, and they inhabit a suggestive space between the named heroes and the anonymous communities of epic.

The most distinctive and well-studied example of this is the 'τις-speech' found throughout Homer, in which an unnamed 'someone' expresses a response to a given situation.[3] As the indefinite pronoun suggests, τις is never in fact a particular individual, but functions as the representative voice of a community.[4] The 'potential' speeches are the speaker's anticipation of the public response to a possible course of action,[5] while the communal nature of the 'actual' speeches is most clearly demonstrated in their introductory and/or capping formulas, which either use plural verbs (e.g. ὥς ἄρ' ἔφαν), or prominently indicate the group represented (e.g. τις Ἀχαιῶν τε Τρώων τε).[6] This use of anonymity is one of the simplest and most straightforward: the effacement of particular identity for the sake of generalization. It is therefore hardly surprising that no clear distinction can be

Nortwick (2009). These studies, however, focus on temporary or assumed anonymity; their discussions of naming therefore centre on the revelation of a character's identity to other characters rather than to the audience. For technical discussion of Homeric names, see e.g. von Kamptz (1982), Mühlestein's collection of articles (1987), and Kanavou (2005).

[3] Schneider's monograph (1996) is the most systematic and exhaustive account of this phenomenon; see also Hentze (1905) Fugariu (1962), de Jong (1987), Wilson (1979). I have not been able to consult the discussion in A. Fingerle's 1939 Munich dissertation, *Typik der Homerischen Reden*. Scholars count these speeches slightly differently, but a comprehensive list must include: *Iliad*: 2.271–278, 3.297–302, 3.319–324, 4.81–85, *4.176–182*, *6.459–462*, *6.479*, *7.87–91*, 7.178–181, 7.201–206, *7.300–302*, *12.317–321*, 17.414–419, 17.420–423, *22.106–108*, 22.372–375, *23.575–578*: *Odyssey*: 2.324–330, 2.331–336, 4.769–773, *6.275–285*, 8.328–332, 10.37–46, 13.167–169, 17.482–487, 18.72–74, 18.111a–116, 18.400–404, 20.375–383, *21.324–329*, 21.361–365, 21.396–403, 23.148–151. Potential speeches, as Wilson (1979:2) describes the "speeches within speeches that refer to the future," are indicated in italics.

[4] Cf. e.g. Schneider (1996:16–17), Richardson (1990:82 and n. 28).

[5] Cf. Fugariu (1962:76), Wilson (1979:2), de Jong (1987:82–83), who point out that such speeches reflect above all the preoccupations of the named speaker of the framing speech.

[6] Contrast de Jong (1987:82). See Schneider (1996:21–35) for a complete list of examples.

made between the τις speeches and the *Chorreden* discussed by Hentze in which speech is ascribed to plural speakers.[7] Homer uses the unidentified, nameless 'someone' to represent a collective group, so that τις is never an individual—and so not a character—in any meaningful sense of the word.

The same can be said of the only anonymous figure in the *Iliad* who is given a voice: the housekeeper who directs Hector to Andromache on the wall at 6.381–389.[8] She speaks only in response Hector's command to a group of δμῳαί (375–376) and there is not even an article to distinguish her. She is described as ὀτρηρή, an adjective used in Homer only of θεράποντες,[9] which complements her anonymity in emphasizing her subservience and low social status. Her role is therefore an impersonal one, in keeping with the domestic setting of the scene,[10] and reinforcing the conventional order of the household while highlighting the anomaly of Andromache's absence.[11]

The *Odyssey* with its changing cast of characters allows more room for anonymity. Its many silent and passive individuals are predominantly nameless,[12] and a much greater role is given to significant and active groups, most of whose members remain nameless.[13] There are, moreover, at least

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[7] E.g. *Il.* 3.155, *Od.* 7.342, 9.493–499, 10.442–445, 10.472–474, 18.112–116, 22.26–30. Cf. Bérard (1924:46 n. 325): "Le personnage anonyme tient, dans l'épos, le même rôle que le chœur dans la tragédie antique."

[8] The *Iliad* gives names even to its silent and peripheral figures with only a handful of exceptions: a few silent slaves, silent heralds, and passive groups whose constituents are never individualized (such as the seven women offered to Achilles by Agamemnon, or the twelve noble Trojans sacrificed on Patroclus' pyre). I omit Briseis and Chryseis from my list of the anonymous; although I agree with Higbie (1995:113) that it is unclear whether these patronymics can be considered as personal names—reflecting their largely objectified status—in the extant epic they are unique designations given to particular individuals.

[9] I.e. *Il.* 1.321; *Od.* 1.109, 4.23, 4.38, 4.217. Kirk *ad* 381–385 points out this adjective diverges from the Odyssean formula αἰδοίη ταμίη.

[10] The housekeeper (ταμία) is a recurrent figure in the *Odyssey*; cf. Kirk (1990:208–210) on the Odyssean nature of 6.369–381. Note that Andromache is also accompanied by a silent and anonymous nurse.

[11] Cf. Arthur (1981:30–31). For a more extreme reading of her absence, see Tsaggalis (2002).

[12] This is particularly true of women; cf. Higbie (1995:111–114) on the conventions of how women are identified. I am struck by how often the revelation of women's names is delayed: Penelope is first mentioned at 1.13 but not named until 1.223; Clytaemestra at 1.35–39 and 3.266 respectively; Arete at 6.51 and 7.54 respectively. Similarly, Eumaeus appears at 13.406 but is not named until 14.55.

[13] Most notably, Odysseus' companions die anonymously along the way. The exception is Antiphus, who is identified at 2.19 in the context of his father's mourning; however, he is not named at the moment of his death or at any other time. The suitors are largely anonymous until the Iliadic (cf. Woronoff (2008)) scene of Odysseus' revenge, when a substan-

four anonymous characters who independently undertake an action: τις γυναικῶν who betrays Penelope to the suitors (2.108), the daughter and the wife of the Laestrygonian Antiphates (10.106 and 10.112), and the Aetolian who once lied about Odysseus to Eumaeus (14.379–385). Finally, there are three anonymous characters who speak: Eumaeus' abductor, the daughter of Arybas (15.417–481), the herald sent by Telemachus' companions to Penelope (16.328–337), and the son of Dolius who sees the suitors' families coming (24.492–495).

It should be noted, however, that the herald and the son of Dolius speak only a single line each and then disappear as individuals from the narrative. The rest of these anonymous figures appear in tales told by other characters: Antinous tells the story of the traitorous maidservant,[14] the Laestrygonian episode is briefly told by Odysseus,[15] and Eumaeus tells the tales of both the Aetolian and the daughter of Arybas. In these accounts, the anonymous figures are defined almost exclusively by a single action, with emphasis on their consequences for the speakers. Only one is described in personal terms or given any characteristics: the woman who figures so prominently in Eumaeus' unexpected autobiography.[16] In the first of three speeches she identifies herself to her Phoenician lover by her country and her father (15.425–426), much as Nausicaa identifies herself to Odysseus (6.195–197).[17] She plays a fully active role in the planning and execution of her escape, and though the term *nostos* is not used, it is strongly suggested by the terms of the Phoenecian's offer (15.431–433). She also indicates a particular personal relationship to Eumaeus (15.450–451). Yet he, as the narrator of

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tial number are named only as they are killed (e.g. 22.265–268, 22.283–286, 22.292–294). See Haubold (2000:100–126) on the complex relationship between the *Iliad*'s *laoi* and the *Odyssey*'s 'companions' and 'suitors.'

14 It is tempting in retrospect to identify this figure with Melantho; however, that name is not used until 18.321, just before her first speech. It is also worth noting that the generalizing effect of anonymity is potentially biased here; presenting τις γυναικῶν as a representative of the household strengthens Antinous' case for the acceptability of the suitors' behaviour.

15 The 'Ogre's Wife' and 'Daughter drawing water at the crossroads' are classic folktale characters (cf. Page (1973:28–31 and bibliography). As I have argued elsewhere, there seems to be a link in other literature (especially Herodotus) between folk patterns and anonymity. See also Higbie (1995:112), who suggests that the daughter's identification only by a patronymic may be related to the restriction of her role to leading the hero to her father.

16 For general interpretation of this episode see Minchin (1992), Olson (1995:136–139).

17 On Nausicaa's self-identification see Higbie (1995:112). This complements the parallel clothes-washing context pointed out by Hoekstra *ad* 15.420: "We are probably dealing with a traditional motif."

her story, does not acknowledge her claims to any individual history or identity.[18] He invariably refers to her simply as γυνή (15.417, 434, 439, 458, 478), and presents her as a generic negative paradigm for the behaviour of a woman (e.g. 15.421–422)[19] and perhaps also a slave[20] who is duly punished by death. Her anonymity is therefore a central part of a subtle conflict in the focalization and presentation of her story.

Hesiod provides us with a further example of the association of naming and particular identity in epic. Both *Works and Days* and the *Theogony* contain an account of the creation of a woman as a punishment inflicted on mankind,[21] but the woman in *Works and Days* 54–105 is named 'Pandora' while *Theogony* 561–616 presents an anonymous γυνή.[22] This is no mere accident, as Clay (2003) notes: "the anonymity of the Woman/Wife stands out conspicuously in a composition that is almost completely given over to names and naming,"[23] while Pandora's naming is given unusual attention in a work with no other etymologies and which is as a whole so generalizing and allegorical.

Furthermore, the namelessness of the γυνή corresponds with the mere physicality of her depiction noted by many scholars; she is "made like a

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18 The disjunction between his narration and the woman's self-presentation is complemented by the pragmatic consideration that there is no explanation of his 'source' for her speech. The most detailed scenes—including the speeches—take place in Eumaeus' absence (15.450), and the whole episode takes place during a single week or two in his early and explicitly "foolish" childhood (ἀεσιφροσύνῃσι, 15.470). Cf. Fenik (1974:76 and n. 106), de Jong (2001:379).

19 His description of her (15.418) also recalls other Homeric situations in which a man evaluates a woman's value. Cf. e.g. the various anonymous women set as prizes, Agamemnon's comparison of Chryseis and Clytaemestra (*Il.* 1.115), Odysseus' comparisons of Calypso and Penelope (*Od.* 5.217) and of Nausicaa and Artemis (*Od.* 6.152). Compare the exclusively mental focus of Antinous' praise of Penelope as compared to Tyro/Alcmene/Mycene (*Od.* 2.117–118).

20 Cf. Thalmann (1998:34–35), Peradotto (2002:7–8), who notes in passing the significance of Eumaeus' focalization.

21 General bibliography on Pandora has expanded significantly in recent years; however, surprisingly few studies discuss the distinction between the accounts of Pandora's/the Woman's creation. These include Hofinger (1969), Casanova (1979), Arthur (1982), Becker (1993), Calabrese de Feo (1995), Clay (2003:119–123). I agree with West (1985:50–53) that the Pandora in the fragments of the *Catalogue of Women* is a different woman; against this view see Osborne (2005:8–10).

22 Should γύνη be Γύνη? See West (Th) *ad* 513; I suspect that this is a subtlety that is inappropriate in an ancient context.

23 Clay (2003:123–124). She is the only significant anonymous individual in Hesiod, though one might compare the son who is never born to Metis (*Th.* 897), and perhaps some of the anthropomorphic abstracts in *Theogony* (e.g. 226–231).

dummy,"[24] "first described purely in terms of her appearance,"[25] "un être tout d'extériorité,"[26] "a static, voiceless, nameless creature, [...] only a semblance of a real thing, only an outer shell, endowed with no inner characteristics."[27] By contrast, Pandora is given "a more complex and intricate mixture of visible and invisible characteristics,"[28] from her voice and her beauty to skills and qualities that are "not physical characteristics, but the subjective reactions to physical characteristics."[29] She is then endowed with a mind and a nature (νόον καὶ [...] ἦθος, 67) and the final touch is her name.[30]

While *Works and Days* tells the story of a specific character, Pandora, the *Theogony* tells a tale about Woman, women, or the first woman.[31] The cause of human suffering in *Works and Days* is the specific action of Pandora's opening the *pithos*, while in the *Theogony* the focus is on the general economic impact of the whole race of women (590) that proceeds from the γυνή.[32] Of course, the story of Prometheus and Pandora in *Works and Days* is almost as much a parable as the two stories that follow it; nevertheless, it is part of Hesiod's narrative strategy that Pandora is a character to the same degree as Prometheus and Epimetheus, while in the *Theogony* the nameless woman is an abstract representation of her gender.

I therefore argue that while both Homer and Hesiod draw upon the generalizing and allegorical potential of namelessness, they do not make significant use of anonymous characters. Names in epic have an almost ontological weight, and the technique of creating a specific, active character without conferring a name upon it has not yet been developed. Anonymity in epic is primarily a quality of collective groups, not yet of individuals.

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24 West (WD) *ad* 61–62.

25 Clay (2003:120).

26 Loraux (1978:29).

27 Arthur (1982:74).

28 Clay (2003:122). It matters little that the description of the creation that follows does not replicate the orders precisely; Zeus' words have already created the character for the audience.

29 Clay (2003:122).

30 Cf. Clay (2003:123), Verdenius *ad* 80: "The naming is not an addition to the creation, but a completion."

31 On this ambiguity see e.g. Casanova (1979:50–51), Calabrese de Feo (1995:113).

32 See e.g. Zeitlin (1995).

2. Aristophanic Comedy: The ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ[33] in *Thesmophoriazusae*

Aristophanic namelessness and naming are extremely complex, but Olson (1992) provides an excellent general introduction to the conventions governing the revelation of the names of six different types of characters.[34] As a complement to his broad overview, I offer a more focused study of an anonymous character who is "resistant to classification"[35] in order to highlight some of the contrasts that can be drawn between comic and tragic anonymity.

This approach is not without its difficulties. Characters and characterization provide perhaps the most difficult point of comparison between tragedy and Aristophanic comedy. I find Silk's "realist/recreative" distinction persuasive,[36] but one need not go as far as that to see that Aristophanic characters—and particularly his heroes—lack consistency. It is impossible to reconcile the implications of every line spoken by a given character into a coherent whole. It is, however, possible to identify the roles that a character plays in a given scene, and it is in this way that I propose to consider the protagonist of *Thesmophoriazusae*.

It is hard to say how aware an audience would be of his anonymity, for unlike his tragic counterparts, it is not uncommon for Aristophanes to withhold the names of his heroes for a significant length of time.[37] Comic timing is clearly a factor in this, but there are additional considerations. Barton, for example, suggests that names are not only selected to "[identify] the hero or heroine with the action on which he or she has embarked," but

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33 It has long been recognized that the name 'Mnesilochus' has no manuscript authority (cf. Hiller 1874:449–453), but its use is still surprisingly widespread. The persistence of the name seems to derive largely from aesthetic considerations: e.g. Silk (2000:208 n. 4): "the name 'Mnesilochus' is not used in the text, but derives from the scholia. This notwithstanding, it is both convenient and harmless, [...] whereas the alternatives (the favourite English alternatives are 'Kinsman' and 'Inlaw') are frigid and distracting." Cf. McLeish (1980:173 n. 74): "Some scholars object to calling him by this name, and prefer a generic title like 'The Relation'. But I prefer to name him, even if manuscript support for the name is suspect."

34 Heroes, slaves, "minor characters," symbolic characters, gods, contemporary Athenians. Russo (1994:34–37) presents a much shorter and less coherent discussion of a similar question. For discussion of the significance of the names themselves, cf. Barton (1990:14–28) and Kanavou (2005:146–210).

35 Silk (2000:231).

36 Cf. Silk (2000: chapter 5). Cf. McLeish (1980:127–131).

37 Cf. Barton (1990:23–26), Olson (1992:305–307), Russo (1994:34–36).

are timed to coincide with the completion or at least the decisive beginning of that action.[38] Olson suggests that heroes sometimes deliberately withhold their names as a matter of strategy in their struggle against an enemy, comparable to Odysseus 'Outis.'[39] These explanations, however, account only for the delay of naming, not for its entire absence in the unique case of the protagonist of *Thesmophoriazusae*.

This is a fact more often noted than explained.[40] However, Barton, in keeping with her emphasis on the significance of a central action, suggests that the κηδεστής is not named because he is only a "passive sufferer, victimized first by his relative [...] and then by the outraged women themselves. [...] This, in an Aristophanic scheme of things where the identity of such characters is associated with achievement, does not entitle him to a personal name" (1990:26).[41] There is an element of truth to this; it is certainly difficult to compare his actions to those of the protagonists of more political plays. However, it is rather misleading to talk of his "victimization" by Euripides; his voluntary decision to assist Euripides has little in common with his hapless suffering at the hands of the women. The language of passivity in his offer is striking (e.g. ἐμοὶ δ' ὅ τι βούλει χρῶ λαβών (212); 'πιδοῦναι 'μαυτόν (217));[42] nevertheless, this is a 'recreative' rather than a consistent quality, and (as I shall argue) does not apply to the majority of his speech and actions. Furthermore, he offers his services to Euripides of his own free will and demonstrates both initiative and creativity during the first encounter with the women and with Cleisthenes. Though he is eventually made physically helpless, he remains active and independent at least until the parabasis (784). He may be the only extant protagonist to fail in his mission,[43] but he nevertheless does undertake one, and pursues it as actively as any

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38 Barton (1990:24–26).

39 Olson (1992:308–309); I would add, however, that it is important to take into account the distinction between self-naming (e.g. Agoracritus at *Eq.* 1257 or Peisetaerus/Euelpides at *Av.* 644–645) and naming by another (e.g. Praxagora at *Eccl.* 124 or Chremylus at *Pl.* 336). Cf. Barton on similar conventions in other genres (1990:131–134).

40 Both Olson (1992:307) and Russo (1994:37) note his anonymity, but do not attempt to explain it.

41 Cf. Kanavou (2005:193).

42 Cf. Compton-Engle (2003:516–520), who traces his passivity in detail, and relates it to his lack of control over his costume.

43 Cf. AO *ad* 184–186 and 466–519, Slater (2002:164–165), Bowie (1993:213), Whitman (1964:222); however, as I argue elsewhere ("The anonymous protagonist and the mirrored structure of *Thesmophoriazusae*," in preparation), this reading is based on a misinterpretation of his mission.

other comic hero. It is therefore not entirely satisfying to explain his anonymity as a reflection of his failure to act.

It is more commonly assumed or implied[44] that the anonymity of the κηδεστής is used to subordinate him, highlighting his relationship with Euripides, and maintaining the focus of the audience on Euripides.[45] This is certainly the most common effect of any namelessness, and Aristophanes does make some use of it. However, a much more complex and dynamic connection exists between Euripides and his κηδεστής for most of the play; it is only in the final scenes that the κηδεστής becomes subordinated and passive.

Aeschylus' Persian Queen provides a useful point of comparison. Both she and the κηδεστής are unique in their genres as anonymous protagonists attached to a character based on a historical figure, identified only by their relationship to that character, and clearly dedicated to his interests. However, in contrast to the consistency of the Queen's representation of her absent son, the κηδεστής' relationship with Euripides varies considerably throughout the play. Furthermore, while Aeschylus defines the Persian Queen's role almost exclusively in terms of Xerxes,[46] the κηδεστής in *Thesmophoriazusae* is largely presented as an independent character; it is not until the last third of the play that he becomes subordinated to his named kinsman. Their relationship is stressed only at the four specific moments where it is particularly significant to the plot,[47] and his interactions with Euripides are otherwise largely characterized by conflict and contrast.

The opening scene, for example, emphasizes their dissimilarity, as the κηδεστής plays the funny man to Euripides' (mostly) straight man. Though he follows Euripides' lead, he is openly unimpressed with his cleverness (e.g. 20–24), and his crude aggression towards Agathon's slave contrasts strongly

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44 Cf. Olson and Austin who call the κηδεστής Euripides' "mouthpiece" (AO lv), or Whitman (1964: chapter 6) who sees Euripides, not the κηδεστής, as the comic hero. Compare McLeish (1983:133–140), who "prefers to name" the κηδεστής (cf. p. 147 n. 33 above), and sees the two as a perfectly balanced "double-act."

45 Compare Kanavou (2011:146–147), who suggests that his anonymity is a generalizing feature encouraging the audience to associate the character with anyone appreciative of Euripides and his tragedy.

46 Cf. pp. 124–129 above.

47 Cf. AO *ad* 74: "the κηδεστής relationship between Inlaw and Eur. is crucial to the plot and is therefore specifically referred to three more times: at 210 (after Agathon has refused to cooperate and Inlaw is preparing to offer himself), 584 […] (implicitly an explanation of why anyone would undertake so dangerous a mission on behalf of another man), and 1165 […], (Eur.'s justification of his unexpected offer to give up denouncing women in his plays.)"

with Euripides' attempt to cultivate him (45–65).[48] These contrasting figures are then unexpectedly and abruptly drawn together by the revelation of their kinship at 74, which serves not only to force Euripides to reveal his problem but also to explain the κηδεστής' wholehearted adoption of his kinsman's plan at 94.[49] Yet once these pragmatic details are clarified, Aristophanes immediately re-establishes the difference between the two heroes in their comic reactions to Agathon's arrival (96–100), and increases this distinction throughout the attempted persuasion.

At 210, however, the κηδεστής unexpectedly brings the relationship once more to the forefront as he offers to take Agathon's place, addressing Euripides as ὦ φίλτατ', ὦ κηδεστά. The sudden and extreme passivity of his language (212–217) recalls the subordination of the anonymous slave of tragedy; however, as soon as the offer is accepted, Aristophanes again re-establishes the dramatic independence of the κηδεστής in the depilation scene that follows (222–248). While this scene is primarily comic, the κηδεστής' vigorous protests also serve to dissociate him from Euripides.

When the playwright leaves the stage at 279, the κηδεστής is left to his own devices,[50] and his independence becomes yet more marked. His first speech 'in character' (279–294) demonstrates both the completeness of his disguise and his autonomy in the execution of his role. Subsequent references to Euripides only serve to heighten the contrast between the two; for example, although he speaks in Euripides' defence, the echoes of *Telephus* in his *apologia*[51] contrast sharply with the vulgarity of his invented autobiography,[52] and as the κηδεστής invites the internal audience to contrast his own account of women's vices with Euripides' (e.g. 490–491, 496–497, 498, 501), Aristophanes encourages the external audience to dissociate the two characters.

Cleisthenes' report at 574–596 introduces the third mention of the κηδεστής relationship (584) at a critical moment, and its associative implications are reinforced by the reminder of the hero's submission to depilation (589–594). The κηδεστής' adoption of Euripidean tactics[53] in kidnapping the 'child'

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[48] Cf. commentaries *ad* 64.

[49] Cf. AO *ad* 94. Yet even within this scene the κηδεστής maintains a comic distance, calling the women's plans δίκαια (86) and the scheme τοῦ σοῦ τρόπου (93).

[50] Cf. AO *ad* 184–186.

[51] Cf. Rau (1967:42–47), commentaries *ad* 466–519.

[52] Cf. Giacomoni (1999), AO *ad* 476–516: "unlike Mika, Inlaw focuses almost exclusively on sexual treachery."

[53] Cf. e.g. Rau (1967:48–50), Zeitlin (1996b:388–389), AO lviii. Even if, as MacDowell (1995:266–267) argues, the audience cannot be expected to remember the details of a par-

encourages the association further—but only until his unexpected decision to 'sacrifice' the hostage. This is not only a comic opportunity and "an implicit acknowledgement" that the plan has failed;[54] the unexpected divergence from the plot of *Telephus* is also a striking means of once again dissociating the κηδεστής from his kinsman.

It is only at this point that the activity of the κηδεστής begins to yield to passivity, and his 'comic heroic' traits as a πονηρός and βωμολόχος[55] begin to disappear.[56] After initiating the *Helen* parody (850), which successfully reintroduces Euripides back onto the stage, the κηδεστής becomes essentially reactive rather than active, subordinated to Euripides and especially to his plays. His own character gradually fades away, and he remains relevant mostly as a vehicle for the two extended parodies.[57] By the fourth and final reference to the κηδεστής relationship (1165),[58] he is fully subordinated.

This volatile series of abrupt associations and dissociations has very little in common with the consistent dramatic dependence of the anonymous figures of tragedy on their named heroes. The term κηδεστής accentuates the subordination of the protagonist at particular moments, but as a rule he plays a predominantly active and independent role that contradicts the usual association of namelessness with self-effacement or the obscuring of particular identity.

How then can we account for his anonymity? A clue can be found in Olson's account of the effect of the naming of Aristophanic slaves (1992:309–312). He persuasively demonstrates that slaves with names tend to be silent and submissive, while the ones who challenge and talk back to their masters, as the κηδεστής does to Euripides, are usually unnamed. For Aristophanic slaves—in stark contrast with other genres—anonymity is not associated

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ticular tragedy, now 27 years old and not explicitly named by Aristophanes, the paratragic elements are undeniable.

54 E.g. Slater (2002:169) and AO lviii respectively.

55 For this "type" of Aristophanic hero see Whitman (1964: chapter 2). This role will be taken up by the Scythian archer, a βωμολόχος par excellence; see McClure (1999:213) for a comparison of their obscene language.

56 Cf. Silk (2000:233), McLeish (1984:140).

57 Accordingly, his 'Helen' is far more passive than the very active heroine of Euripides' play; cf. AO lxi: "Inlaw's Helen […] is a strikingly helpless figure." Similarly, while his 'Andromeda' can speak to 'Echo,' she is almost silent when 'Perseus' appears; cf. AO lxii: "what we know of the Euripidean original suggests that it was a complex tale of argument and intrigue, which has been reduced in Th. to something strikingly reminiscent of the truncated version of *Helen* that precedes it."

58 Aristophanes here places particular emphasis on the possessive ἐμός (cf. the κηδεστής' own appeal at 74 to κηδεστὴν ἐμόν). It may also be significant that this is the first time that Euripides himself has claimed the relationship.

with subjection but, on the contrary, with dramatic independence. This is most effectively demonstrated by Sosias in *Wasps* who plays a fully active role as an anonymous slave in the prologue, but falls mute after his naming at 136 and departs in silence shortly afterwards.[59]

Aristophanes seems to draw upon this particular implication of anonymity as well as the more usual connotation of dramatic subordination for the protagonist of *Thesmophoriazusae*. During the first half of the play the κηδεστής, like other Aristophanic heroes, resists naming; even when interrogated by Cleisthenes, he successfully prevaricates (619–625).[60] He never identifies Telephus by name either as a play or as a character; when he adapts the *Palamedes* he announces the play but avoids naming the role that he is adopting (770). However, not only does he name the last two plays parodied (850, 1012), but he actually identifies himself to Critylla as Helen (862), and is named by Euripides to the Scythian as Andromeda (1113). Is it a coincidence that it is during these two parodies that his distinctiveness as a character is finally eroded? Perhaps adopting a name—even in the context of a parody—robs him, like Sosias, of his dramatic autonomy.

It is unlikely that the κηδεστής would have been mistaken for a slave even in the prologue.[61] Nevertheless, the dynamics of his association/dissociation with Euripides are strongly reminiscent of the subordination/independence of anonymous slaves to and from their masters. It therefore seems that Aristophanes uses namelessness not simply to encourage the 'recreative' association of the free κηδεστής with his relative, but also to confer upon him the kind of dramatic autonomy enjoyed by anonymous slaves, thereby creating a complex and compelling relationship.

3. A Brief Note on Later Tragedy

Greek tragedy has inspired a vast number of adaptations and reinventions, and the anonymous characters discussed in this study have remained prominent in many of them, though they have attracted very little schol-

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[59] Olson (1992:311). There are suggestive parallels among women as well; in this play both Mika and Kritylla are similarly named only shortly before the end of their substantial roles (cf. AO *ad* 760–761, Sidwell (2009:272–274)).

[60] Cf. *Av.* 65–68, and p. 148 and n. 39 above.

[61] It is unclear whether costuming would have indicated slave/free status (cf. Stone (1984:282–285)), but other plays that introduce a slave/master pair immediately identify the relationship (e.g. *Ra.* 1, *Pl.* 2). It is also possible that the slave/free distinction is relatively unimportant in Aristophanes; cf. Sommerstein (2009).

arly attention.[62] It is not within the scope of this study to examine them in any detail as the difficulty of interpretation is multiplied by the implications of influence from a wide range of traditions; however, I wish to point out that while later tragedians adapted many specific and plot-significant anonymous characters invented by their Greek predecessors, they did not adopt the technique of their invention and use.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of this is that anonymous characters in later tragedy are for the most part inherited from particular Greek models rather than invented. For example, in the seven Senecan tragedies for which there is an extant Greek precedent,[63] he invents only the Old Man in *Troades*. Of the various anonymous characters that Seneca adapts,[64] most are restricted to the same plot functions as their Greek equivalents. In addition to this, most are presented much more independently; there seems to be a pattern of such characters attempting (unsuccessfully) to dissuade a hero from a particular wrong.[65]

The Nurse in *Phaedra*, for example, responds to the revelation of her mistress' passion with two long speeches urging endurance (129–177, 195–217). Her philosophy, however, is abruptly abandoned as soon as the action of the play demands it (267–273),[66] and though she later includes Stoic appeals to divine providence and to nature in her attempted persuasion of Hippolytus (e.g. 466, 478, 481–482), her aim is hardly philosophical.[67] The contact between the two characters is equally variable; the Nurse's second speech, for example, takes little notice of the relationship between the characters (e.g. 202–205, 215),[68] while the appeal at 246–247 is intensely personal. Her independence from Phaedra is emphasized in her initiation of the revenge plot (719–735);[69] she does not even consult her mistress in this, addressing only her own *anima*. Phaedra's involvement in the scheme

62 Exceptions include a few recent articles on the Nurse figure in Seneca (e.g. Bernal Lavesa (2003), Schmidt (1995), Castagna (2007)). Studies on the confidant figure in French Tragedy have a longer history (see Worth (1999) and bibliography).

63 Although Senecan tragedies are no longer generally held to be modelled on a specific Greek play (cf. Hine (1987:257)), in this respect the traces of imitation are surprisingly consistent.

64 Including various messengers, the Nurses of Medea and Phaedra, the Shepherds from *OT* (one of whom he names Phorbas), and the Herald of Agamemnon (called Eurybates).

65 Cf. Pratt (1948:9).

66 Cf. Leeman (1976:207) and—at length—Schmidt (1995 *passim*). CM (29) caution against over-reading Stoicism into the tragedies.

67 Cf. Leeman (1976:207), Boyle *ad* 481.

68 Cf. commentaries *ad* 195–217.

69 Cf. CM (155).

is not clear until 864 ff., when she fully embraces the role assigned to her by the Nurse.[70] The audience's awareness of this artifice also undermines the closeness implied by Phaedra's capitulation to Theseus' threat to torture the slave (882–885); it is unclear just what she might 'betray.' Seneca therefore gives the Nurse a range of functions, but they are largely independent of Phaedra's presentation.

Corneille and Racine also adopt many of Euripides' characters, particularly the nurses and tutors. There is considerable range in their dramatic use;[71] however, they are invariably given names and treated more like the minor named characters of Greek tragedy or perhaps even the 'clever slaves' of New and Roman comedy. They take on some of the functions of the classical chorus, and are integrated closely into the action as confidants. These figures remain subordinate and loyal, appearing usually in the presence of their master/mistress; however, they relinquish the complete self-effacement that make the Greek tragedians' anonymous characters such useful tools. Their relationships with their masters are more reciprocal, and they act and react accordingly; they also tend to appear not in one or two scenes, but throughout the play. Thus in Racine's *Phèdre* Phaedra's Nurse becomes 'Oenone,' who not only combines the Euripidean and Senecan functions of forcing the revelation of her mistress' secret and inventing the story of the rape, but even commits suicide at the end of the play out of remorse, paralleling Phaedra's own death.[72] Her relationship with her mistress and therefore her dramatic role are considerably more developed; though based on Euripides' anonymous character, she is much closer in every way to the minor named characters from the Greek tradition, and performs similar functions.

These brief overviews suggest a general correlation between the use of anonymity and the literary or dramatic priorities of each poet, particularly as concerns the construction of character and identity. In epic, a name is necessary to define a character, in accordance with the poetic focus on fame; it accordingly uses anonymity only to generalize and does not create nameless individuals. Comedy, with its discontinuity of character, uses naming and namelessness to shape not the dramatic function of the characters but the dynamics of their actions and interactions. Seneca's use of anonymous

[70] Cf. Fitch and McElduff (2002:34–35) on "role-play" and self-representation.
[71] Cf. Worth (1999 *passim*).
[72] Cf. Worth (1999:205–216).

figures reflects his emphasis on rhetoric and philosophy, while Racine and Corneille eliminate anonymity entirely, developing all of their characters as plausible named individuals of greater or lesser dramatic importance. Only in Greek tragedy do we find the self-effacing potential of anonymity developed in individual characters and directed towards shaping the audience perception of named heroes and their stories.

CONCLUSION

The challenge faced by the fifth-century tragedians was essentially this: to breathe new life into an old story. The tension between innovation and tradition was intensified by the explicitly competitive context of composition that pressured the poets to create not merely pleasant retellings but striking and distinctive interpretations of the inherited myths. To make a story his own—not just an Electra, but *his Electra*—the playwright may introduce innovations in plot or setting; he may highlight distinctive themes or motifs; but he must also present heroes who are not only believable,[1] but who are distinctly memorable to the audience. That is to say, he must transform the familiar mythological heroes into unique dramatic characters.

It has been my aim to demonstrate the subtle but substantial role that anonymous characters play in this transformation. I hope that in doing so I have not only presented useful arguments for particular interpretations of the scenes and heroes discussed, but also given some sense of the extraordinary variety of ways in which the tragedians make use of anonymous figures to subtly influence the audience's perception of the heroes. Anonymous characters in tragedy are above all unique; each is tailored by the poet to meet the needs of a particular play, and each helps to realize the particular interpretation being presented. Anonymous characters may speak five lines or five hundred. They may be crucial to the plot or entirely extraneous to the action. They may be realistically or perfunctorily portrayed. They may be used to provide important descriptions, criticisms, (mis)representations, dialogue or actions as required. There seem to be no limitations on the ways in which the playwright can use nameless characters to bring out the most important aspects of his interpretation of the heroes. It is therefore no coincidence that a number of the passages considered in this study have made their way into Seidensticker's 1982 discussion of comic elements in tragedy, or have been suspected as interpolations; the anonymous character, unlike the hero, is restricted neither by any traditional expectations nor by any 'tragic sphere' and can

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[1] Cf. p. 7 above.

therefore be used to produce every imaginable effect, from pity or grief to amusement or repugnance.

Tragedy does not even seem to have produced a set of conventional stock characters, such as the 'clever slave' of New Comedy, or the 'riddling Fool' in Shakespeare; there is no typecasting of such characters to act in the place of personal mythological history. It is true, as we saw in Section I, that certain 'classes' share certain characteristics; for example, nurses and tutors consistently retain affection for and some authority over their former charges, while heralds always act as representatives of their masters. This, however, is a matter of definition that is almost entirely independent of the conventions of a genre.

Yet while nameless figures such as the Watchman in *Agamemnon* can be more individual, sympathetic, or even realistic than the archetypal heroes that they serve, they are inherently self-effacing. An anonymous character may have great stage presence, and may be genuinely touching or amusing or ominous, but as soon as he leaves the stage he leaves the play, and in most cases is never given another thought either by the characters onstage or by the audience. This remarkable effect is achieved largely through three related characteristics that enhance the inconspicuousness of anonymity: relatively low social status (or weakness), an aversion to direct conflict or contrast with any major character, and complete subordination to a particular named hero.

The importance of social subordination in minimizing the audience's awareness of anonymous characters is directly linked to the importance of fame in ancient culture. The survival of name and reputation is the motivation of almost every hero in Greek literature,[2] while anonymity is always closely linked with powerlessness, as in the first line of *Hippolytus*. Accordingly, anonymous characters tend to be born slaves or other lowly persons who are considered *ipso facto* incapable of heroic action, with no place in the inherited tradition. Those characters who possess some social prestige, such as heralds and priests, are clearly relatively if not absolutely humble, and their loyalty to their masters, human or divine, is always stressed. Even in the extreme case of the unnamed Queen in Aeschylus' *Persae*, as has been argued in Section III.1, her entire subordination to her son Xerxes approximates the self-effacement typical of other anonymous characters in spite of her immense social and dramatic importance.

[2] Admittedly, poets have some interest in promoting this idea.

It is therefore hardly surprising that anonymous characters only rarely engage in significant confrontations with the named heroes, though each poet accomplishes this in a characteristically different way. Aeschylean minor characters, whether named or not, tend not to interact with the heroes at all; their parts are either entirely discrete (e.g. the Watchman in *Agamemnon*), extremely brief (e.g. Aegisthus' Servant in *Choephoroi*), or primarily narrative (e.g. the Scout in *Septem*), so that there is no possibility of their coming into significant contact with the major characters.

Sophocles integrates his anonymous figures more closely into the action; but however important they may be dramatically, he never uses them in the direct conflicts and contrasts which are so crucial for his heroes, reserving this for secondary named characters and choruses. For example, in *Electra* the Tutor plays a crucial role in the deception of Clytaemestra, but he does not come into conflict with her and takes no part in the final debate with Aegisthus; similarly, it is Ismene and not the Watchman who is directly contrasted with Antigone.

Many Euripidean anonymous characters, on the other hand, do challenge their superiors, ranging from the reservations of the Messengers in *Bacchae* to the cautious warning of the Old Man in *Hippolytus* and the suicidal defiance of the Servant in *Helen*. However, these exchanges are generally extremely brief and take place early in the action, before the tensions of the play have been developed. If not, as in *Helen* and *Heracleidae*, the actions challenged are so unsympathetic or improbable that the vehemence of the anonymous character's protests conveys a generalized condemnation rather than a particular perspective. The individuality of such figures are therefore minimized.

It is not conflict, but compliance that characterizes the anonymous character. Throughout extant tragedy, his most consistent and significant attribute is his attachment to a particular named hero; he does not have his own agenda or goals, but works for the happiness and welfare of his master (though not always successfully). This is complemented by the fact that the onstage presence of the anonymous character is focused not on himself, but on the hero, and serves largely to illustrate some unusual or important aspect of the poet's particular interpretation of the traditional characters and their story. Such scenes are never the only evidence of the playwright's innovation, but instead serve to subtly confirm what is demonstrated elsewhere in the play (or more often to introduce it, as these scenes generally occur early in the play).

The effectiveness of particular anonymous figures in characterizing their heroes has been examined in detail, but the significance of this method as

a whole is most strongly argued by the fact that it is used in almost every extant play.[3] What is more, the frequency with which anonymous characters are used to create scenes focused on the presentation of a hero's character, particularly when they play no role in the plot, is an indication of the importance of characterization in tragedy. It will surprise no one that most of the examples discussed have been drawn from Euripides, given both the chance preservation of a comparatively large number of his plays and his generally recognized interest in character. It is perhaps equally unsurprising that Sophocles, whose plays boast the most minor named characters, has provided the fewest examples of significant nameless ones. What is more unexpected is that every play of confirmed Aeschylean authorship provides an example of an anonymous character whose dramatic contribution consists largely, if not solely, of the development of a named hero's characterization.

Throughout extant tragedy, anonymous characters are a versatile means of directing the audience's attention to a particular interpretation of a traditional hero. The creation of such characters is a fundamental and distinctive part of the Greek tragedian's craft, and appreciation of the subtlety and variety of their use enriches any reading—or performance—of the plays.

[3] Anonymous figures are even present in vase-paintings; see e.g. Taplin (2007).

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